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THEODORE L. CUYLER



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Preface.

For many years Dr. Cuyler has wielded the pen of a ready writer, and his contributions to the religious press have been of so valuable a character that it has been deemed advisable once more to present a portion of them to the public in a durable and attractive form that should render them permanently accessible.

The present volume includes a number of the choicest articles

which have been written by Dr. Cuyler within recent years. It is our confident expectation that the inspiring thoughts here given, presenting varied phases of the warfare which the Christian wages continually in "campaigning for Christ," will prove a help and incentive to faithful service under our great Leader and Commander.

Pivot Battles in Life.

The history of the world has often turned on a few decisive battles. Had they resulted differently some great currents of history would have been entirely changed. On the field of Marathon, for example, Greece was saved from the heel of Persian despotism; and the victory of the Christian forces at Lepanto saved Eastern Europe from the dominion

of Islam. The battle of Marengo placed the imperial crown on Napoleon's brow; Waterloo swept it off and sent the gigantic desolater to the desolation of his prison-rock of St. Helena. The American Revolution turned on the pivot of the fight at Saratoga; and the struggle for Union and Emancipation turned on the pivot of that fierce encounter at the "bloody angle" on the field of Gettysburg.

Every one is likely to have one or more decisive moral battles in life. A "Yes" or a "No" has cost many a man his fortune, or his character, his life or his soul. If Daniel had said "yes" to the temptations in the royal palace, and afterwards to the threats outside of the palace, we never should have heard of Daniel. We all may

have our Marengos, or our Waterloos, where we win or lose the crown of Christian character. When such decisive conflicts come on there are a few simple rules of moral warfare to be remembered and practised. Here are some of them:

1. Stand firm for the right; never change your position in the face of an enemy. This policy was fatal to the Russians at Austerlitz; it has cost many a disgraceful defeat in spiritual warfare.

2. Never place on guard a doubtful principle. Your sentinel will be sure to betray you.

3. Never abandon the high ground of right for the lowlands and swamps of expediency. No man was ever lost on a straight road.

4. Get your spiritual armor from the Word of God, and put on the whole armor. Ahab was wounded through the joints of his harness. Never yield an inch to Satan's most plausible temptations. It is hard to recover a force that has begun to retreat.

5. Do not mind blows in the face, whether in the form of ridicule or of open opposition. Many a one has been sneered out of his soul's salvation. Brave people are struck in the face; cowards are wounded in the back.

6. Whether wounded by foes, or deserted by false friends, never surrender! It is said that towards the close of the long, bloody fight at Waterloo, when the small remnant of the Imperial Guard were summoned to lay down their arms,

they shouted, "The Old Guard can die, but they never surrender." The Great Captain of our salvation could die for us, but he never deserts us. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Remember that it is only those who endure to the end who are saved.

If the moral biographies of most persons could be carefully scanned it would be found that their destinies have often turned on certain pivot-occasions in life. Decisions made in a few moments have reached into eternity. The young ruler decided in a few minutes to reject Christ; Bartimeus seized the one pivot-opportunity of his life, and was healed. John B. Gough's whole grand career as the prince of Christian advocates of temper-

ance turned on his decision to take the total abstinence pledge on a certain evening in Worcester. It was under the faithful pleadings of Harlan Page, at a street corner on a cold wintry night, that young Edwin F. Hatfield decided for Christ; that was the starting-point of one of the most fruitful ministries New York has ever seen.

Some who are reading this chapter may be seriously thinking about this most momentous of all questions, Shall I give myself to Christ?

The prime essential with you is that you put your Saviour just where the loyal soldier of old put his sovereign—in the core of your heart. You must be ready to say, "Wherever Christ leads, I will follow; whatever he commands, I will

obey." For bear in mind that the chief thing you do when you enlist in Christ's service is, not to subscribe to a system of sound doctrine, important though that may be, but to confess Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, and to pledge to him lifelong loyalty and obedience. You join your weakness to his strength, your ignorance to his wisdom, your unworthiness to his merits, your interests to his oversight, your poverty to his resources, your whole self to his service. If you do that sincerely, Christ becomes responsible for you. He will provide for your spiritual armor. He will furnish you the daily rations of truth and grace to feed you. His precious promise is, "My grace is sufficient for you." His guaranty is, "No man shall

pluck you out of my hands; because I live, ye shall live also." Christ accepts no volunteer for six months or for a single campaign. If you enlist, you must *enlist for life.* On the blade of that sword of the Spirit which the Captain of your salvation hands to you is inscribed: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved."

My friend, you have the power of choice. Decide now! It will be harder to do it to-morrow, and of the morrow you are not sure. You expect to be saved, and intend to be saved; and yet your soul may be lost through procrastination. Lay down this book and have an honest hour with conscience and with Christ. Ask him to let you follow him, and to give

you strength and courage to take the first steps. "What thou doest, do quickly!"

Heaven or hell may hang on the pivot of the decision you are now making. Shall this battle end in victory or ruin?

Christ Calls You.

THE three sweetest words that have ever fallen on human ears are these three spoken by Jesus Christ, "Come unto me!" All the libraries of human philosophy, if boiled down to their essence, cannot compare with them. To whom is this cordial invitation addressed? It is to every one; and if, my dear reader, you have never come, it is to you directly. Observe how short and simple and summary is

the call. It is the urgency of love. Come! cries the hospitable Master of the Gospel feast; my supper is prepared, and all things are ready. Come! cries the voice of yearning affection; you have stayed away too long; I have a great gift for you; whosoever cometh unto me hath eternal life! Love is always urgent, and divine authority has a right to be. As if it were not enough for Jesus Christ to utter the gracious invitation himself, the closing words of your Bible re-echo the call—"the Spirit and the bride say, *come!* And let him that heareth say *come!* And let him that is athirst *come!* and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These last words sound like a melody from the music of heaven.

No less a personage than the Son of God presents to you this most pressing invitation, and holds out to you the supreme inducement of sins forgiven, heart purified, and a *new life* imparted which will go on enlarging and brightening to all eternity. Jesus Christ does not present to you a system of doctrine and ask you to study it; he does not paint for you an ideal and ask you to admire it; he offers you *himself*. It is a person, not a system that you need; a person who atones for your sins, a person who teaches you how to live, a person who is able to help you; yea, a person who will enter into your inmost soul and abide there as a constant presence and an almighty power. Jesus says to you, "He that hath the Son hath life." The

most extraordinary man in the first century declared, "I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me;* and the life I live is by faith on the Son of God."

Perhaps you attend some Christian church, and enjoy a good sermon, and often read your Bible and accept it as the inspired Word of God. You may often pray, and even intend to become a Christian before you die. But churches, sermons, Bible-reading, prayers and good intentions do not save your soul. Jesus Christ makes the Christian. He says, "Come to me." The Holy Spirit saith, "Come;" and of all the multitudes who were seen by John as praising God in the white robes of heaven, it is declared that they had "washed their robes and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Just *how* shall I come to Christ?" To this proper question I would reply that "coming" implies action on your part; it is more than an opinion, a feeling or a desire. It is a positive step. The only faith in Christ that is of the least avail is the faith that *acts*. In two ways your faith may act—*prayer* and *practice*. Your sins lie as a heavy score against you; pray fervently for forgiveness. Your heart is unclean; pray for cleansing. You are morally weak, deplorably weak; pray for strength. All this prayer will not avail if you *do* nothing toward the answering of your own petitions. *Obey* Christ! Begin to do what he bids you. This means a ready, sin-

cere, conscientious obedience to a new Master. The first thing you do simply to obey Jesus Christ marks the change; that is the first evidence of conversion.

Christ is very gentle and patient and kind with new beginners who are sincere in coming to him. He says, "Learn of me" in very much the same way that a loving mother directs and helps her baby who is making its first attempts at walking. Remember that you are dealing with a divine all-powerful Person, who can act and does act directly on you and me in a *supernatural* fashion, promises his supernatural help to you in the coming; and when you begin to obey him, he tenderly says to you, "My burden I will make light; my yoke

is lined with love; my grace is sufficient for you."

"If I come to Christ, must I not deny myself and take up a cross?" Yes, you must deny *sinful self*. There is hardly a noble deed to be wrought in this world but it requires self-denial of some sort. Jesus Christ does not make Christians simply to make them comfortable; he provides no palace cars for transportation of self-coddling disciples. It is what you and I give up for Christ and our fellowmen that makes us rich. Rejoice that he who bore our sins on the cross seeks to have us "bear one another's burdens," and so fulfil the law of love. Do not, I entreat you, bargain for a cheap and easy religion. Following Christ brings some uphill climbs, but vic-

tory and holy joys await us at the top; crosses then will turn into shining crowns.

His gracious promise is, "Come unto me and I will give you *rest.*" Don't misunderstand that pregnant word. It does not mean idleness or heaven in advance. There is no such crushing load of bondage as sin. The Redeemer Christ, at infinite cost, died to relieve you of that load of damning guilt; you can only find relief by accepting him as your substitute, your sacrifice and your Saviour. The rest that is promised you is a soul-rest. Money or fame cannot purchase that. The sweet sense of forgiven sin, the peace with God which conversion brings, the repose which you will feel when conscience tells you that you are

right—just as the compass needle is at rest when it points to the pole—the satisfaction of doing good under the inspiration of Christ within you, the glorious assurance of heaven at last; all these are held out to you in that loving hand that was wet with tears and red with atoning blood. Can you refuse such a call as that? On your "Yes" or "No" to Christ hangs your destiny to all eternity.

Christ's Prisoners.

THESE two words, when read together, sound like a singular pair of bedfellows. For to be behind the bars of a jail in our day commonly indicates an accomplice of Satan. But in apostolic days imprisonment often was a badge of honor. The chiefest of the apostles when he wrote a letter to his Colossian friend Philemon signed himself, "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ." The old hero is Christ's ambassador in Nero's fetters—a prisoner not

for evil-doing but for well-doing. His manacles are badges of honor; and while his scarred body is bound, his soul is rejoicing as Christ's freed-man from the yoke of sin, and there is not a happier man in Rome.

The essence of imprisonment is to be confined to one place, without the permission or possibility of going where one chooses. In this sense, there are a great many good people who are Christ's servants and yet are prisoners. They are *shut-ins* without their own consent. Some of them are unable to get into God's house on the Sabbath, though the Lord of the house comes to them. Some have been confined within the walls of one room for long weary years. During my pastorate, I used to

visit, year after year, a lovely and cultured young lady who knew nothing of the out-door world except the glimpse she got from her bedroom window. What sermons that brave girl used to preach to me on the beauties of Christian patience! I learned from her what a sweet rest there is in the "Everlasting Arm." She never uttered to me one syllable of discontent during the whole fourteen or fifteen years of her imprisonment in that sick chamber! When I read to her some cheering passage from God's Book or gave her a sip of honey from that inexhaustible honeycomb, a joyous smile passed over her face which was sadly distorted by long disease, as if she were saying, "Oh, how good that tastes!" If there

was one room in Brooklyn that the Master "ofttimes resorted to" it was that in which this bright, sunny-souled girl spent all her youthful years as a "prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Just why it is that the all-wise and loving Master permits some of his choicest servants to be laid aside from all active service and to be tortured often by sharp bodily pains, I can no more understand than I can understand why he permitted the brilliant and beloved Dr. Babcock to cut the cord of his own precious life under a sudden stroke of delirium. It is the frequent *permissive providences* of God that put the hardest strain on my faith. When every voice is so needed to teach and to preach his gospel, why does he doom so many

to silence? When every hand is needed in his service, why does he allow so many of his soldiers to lie helpless in the hospitals? It is not my business to explain all these mysteries. But there are some explanations that give me partial relief.

One is that the Christian life is a school for the promotion of that vitally important thing—*Christly character*. And some of the most beautiful traits can only be got through suffering. Hot furnaces often make the brightest Christians. It is not those whom he hates, but those whom he loves, that he often chastiseth. The Master sits as a *refiner* beside the furnace of affliction. He heats it until the metal melts, and the dross of selfishness and impatience

and unbelief runs off. He often keeps his silver in the furnace till he can see his own face reflected in the clear metal of the heart as in a mirror. Then the affliction is doing its appointed work, and Jesus has "made the vessel unto his own honor." During my pastoral experience, I have discovered some of the most attractive and well-ripened Christian characters belonged to those who were confirmed invalids or who had been schooled by intense bodily sufferings. Perhaps when such reach heaven they may be more than content that in this world they were among the Lord's *shut-ins*.

Another truth must not be overlooked. The prisoners of Jesus Christ may be among the most useful of his servants—I mean

useful to others. Paul did some of his very best work when a prisoner. A jailer locked him up at Philippi; but in a few hours, he had that very jailer at his feet crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" At Rome he preached the gospel to those around him until there were many converts in Cæsar's household. He wrote seven of his inspired epistles while he was Nero's captive—one of them was the letter to Philippi, which is the especial epistle of gratitude for divine mercies and of exultant joy under sharp afflictions. As canary birds sometimes sing even when their cages are covered to prevent it, so this old hero, when caged at Rome, furnished to the world some most sublime melodies of faith and vic-

torious courage. I need not remind my readers of the case of John Bunyan, who would probably never have written the immortal "Pilgrim's Progress" if he had not been an inmate of Bedford jail.

Miss Charlotte Elliott composed that wonderful hymn, "Just as I am, without one plea," and some others of her exquisite songs of the soul, while she was imprisoned in a sick chamber. Several years ago the wife of my beloved friend Charles H. Spurgeon took me into what she called her "workshop." Although her ill-health did not allow her to attend her husband's church, she spent much of her time during the week in sending off volumes of commentaries and other helps in Bible study

to poor ministers and "village preachers;" and she told me that she had sent off thousands of volumes on that beneficent errand! An invalid lady, who could no longer be a tract distributer in her district, spent her time in folding and directing leaflets of awakening to the impenitent, or consolations to the troubled—and these she sent through the post or by a special messenger. You may imprison a body, but you cannot imprison a soul that is luminous with the light of Jesus, and vocal with the inspiration of his spirit.

Some of Christ's faithful ones may read these words in a sick-room; others in an abode of poverty or under sore privations of some sort. Beloved fellow-disciples—it matters little where we

are, so long as our inner life is hid with Christ, and our souls are luminous with the light and joy of his presence.

A Veteran Soldier of Christ.

For nearly forty years my most intimate friend was that Heaven-honored servant of Jesus Christ, the late Newman Hall. Our love was like the love of David and Jonathan. The letters that passed between us numbered up into the hundreds; when he was in America my house was his home; when I was in London, I often found a home in his delightful "Vine House" up on Hampstead Hill. One reason for the close intimacy between my English brother and

myself was that we were perfectly agreed on every social, civil, moral or religious question, and we never had a chance to sharpen our wits on the bone of controversy. Our theology we got from the same Book; our aim was to fight the same destructive sins with the same weapons; we both had the simple purpose to work as hard as we could, and to win as many souls to Christ as possible.

As my readers may all know, Newman Hall was born at Maidstone, in Kent, on the twenty-second of May, 1816. His father, John Vine Hall, was the editor of a Maidstone newspaper, and the author of "The Sinner's Friend," a tract that had an immense circulation. Among the ten children of his beautiful mother—who was

as near like Hannah of old as any mother can be—Newman was rather a pet son until her dying day. The first lesson she taught him was the verse "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." These words were the keynote of his whole ministry, when the boy became a man. At fourteen he was apprenticed in his father's printing office, and had the rare honor to report for his father's paper the last speech (on negro slavery) that the illustrious William Wilberforce ever delivered. He united with the Congregationalist Church at sixteen years of age, and entered Highbury College. His first purpose was to practice law; but

like Finney, Dr. Talmage, and many others, he soon quitted the law for the gospel. The reason that Newman Hall gave for the change was one that possibly may influence some Christian young man who reads these words. He said to himself, "I don't feel as if any secular business would call out my *greatest energies*, and I want to address my fellow-men so as to *persuade them to Christ.*" When a young man who has good brains and good health feels intensely the same convictions that influenced Newman Hall, he has a divine call to the ministry.

I need not review my dear brother Hall's whole career. First as the pastor of the Albion Chapel, from 1842 to 1854, then as the well-known pastor of "Surrey

Chapel," in London, until he removed into the new edifice of "Christ Church," on Westminster Road, on the fourth of July, 1876. The lofty "Lincoln Tower," which rises from one end of the spacious church, was built from the contributions from America, both as a memorial of our beloved President, and a symbol of international unity. I need not repeat here the circumstances under which Dr. Hall wrote his immortal tract, "Come to Jesus," for they are familiar to all. It has been printed in forty languages, and to the number of over three millions of copies.

Many of my readers doubtless heard Brother Hall preach during some one of his three visits to America. What delightful and

soul-nourishing sermons he poured forth, with a sweet, musical voice and a most earnest persuasiveness. Preaching was as easy to him as breathing. Including the Sabbath, he often preached seven or eight times a week. Undoubtedly he delivered more sermons than any ordained minister during the nineteenth century. Peers and peasants, scholars and inmates of the slums, alike enjoyed his preaching of God's love messages to immortal souls. I wish that all the students in our theological seminaries could listen to a Newman Hall or a Spurgeon about once a month; it would teach them how to preach. One of Dr. Hall's sermons in this country, on "Jehovah-Jireh," was especially helpful; and one on the "Touch of Christ's Garment" was

a gem of spiritual beauty. He was fond of street preaching, and I have seen him gather a crowd about him and hold them while he sowed a few seeds of precious truth into their hearts.

I wish I had space to describe some of the "foregatherings" that I have had with my twin brother in the gospel. We visited Rome together—preached to the "saints that be in Rome," and went down into that room in the sub-basement of "St. Clements'," where Paul is believed to have held meetings with them that were "of Cæsar's household." We tramped out on the Appian road over which the great Apostle entered the Eternal City. So conscientious was Brother Hall in his teetotalism that, however weary or thirsty,

he would never touch the cheap, weak wine that was offered to us. We went once together to Olney, sat in Cowper's summer-house, and entered John Newton's church, where the old sexton told Dr. Hall that he had been converted by reading "*Come to Jesus.*" (Such happy incidents frequently occurred.) A very delightful couple of days we spent once in rowing down the romantic river Wye, halting for lunch at Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." In his home at Hampstead, Dr. Hall was a hospitable Gaius, with open doors and heart to friends from all lands. He had the merry sportiveness of a schoolboy, and when our long talks in his study were over, he would seize his hat and the chain of his pet dog, and cry out,

"Now, brother, come and let's have a tramp over the heath!" He was a prodigious pedestrian, and at three-score and ten could hold his own over a Swiss glacier with members of the "Alpine Club."

Dr. Hall used to tell me that he hoped to equal his famous predecessor, Rowland Hill, and preach until he was ninety. But, at eighty-five, his iron constitution began to break down, and in the autumn of 1901 a bronchial attack silenced his eloquent tongue. He wrote to me on the tenth of January, 1902—my eightieth birthday—his last loving letter, which breathed the spirit of holy Rutherford. He said, "I really begin to think that I am not far from my heavenly home. Oh, the

blessed and assured hope! I *know* whom I have believed—the *person* himself, the friend of sixty years—intimately, experimentally, continuously, in storm as well as in calm, upholding, reproving and consoling me! Oh, to know *Him* as my own brother, champion and guide, and be certain that he will never forsake us. My beloved joins me in devout thanksgiving and prayers for you and yours on this birthday; and may all blessings from the fountain of all bliss rest upon you!''

On the 27th of January, 1902, he was stricken with paralysis, and never left his bed again. His illness awakened deep sympathy over the whole nation. He had been the intimate friend of Gladstone, Bright, and other statesmen; the

leader in many philanthropies, and the best-known minister in Britain. During his closing days he gave utterance to many inspiring words. When asked if he suffered any pain, he replied, "No, not any pain—nothing to disturb the solemnity of dying." One of his last testimonies was, "Jesus Christ is, if possible, ten thousand times more precious than ever." On the morning of the 14th of February he peacefully passed away; and, as John Bunyan said of old Valiant-for-the-truth, "the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

No diadem worn by any earthly monarch is more than a bauble in comparison with the unfading crown of glory worn by that faithful, fearless, veteran soldier of Christ, Newman Hall.

"Resist the Devil, and He Will Flee from You."

JUST as the wintry winds search into every crack and crevice of our houses, so Satan hunts and pries at every loophole of the heart with artful suggestions. Sin is everywhere. It assails us through the eye-gate, through the ear-gate and the mouth-gate; it invades the pocket and inflames pride and selfish ambition. Even the hum-

blest Christian may be tempted to grow complacent over his humility, and the most consecrated laborer for Christ is in danger of flattering himself with the congratulation, "Oh, how my work prospers! how my vineyard flourishes!" Righteous self needs about as much watching as sinful self.

The strength of temptation depends on the strength of sinful desires within a man. It requires no grace to reject what we do not like. A torch does no mischief when it is tossed into a snow-bank; it is the torch in the powder-barrel that makes the fatal explosion.

Let me impress it upon young people that when an attractive evil object presents itself to you, and there is something within you that would like to consent to that evil,

then comes the danger. Right then and there your Christian conscience must fight its battle.

Some of you may have naturally strong sensual passions or animal appetites. The fatal sin is not so much in having such propensities, as in yielding to them. The real victory of divine grace in your soul is to refuse the most attractive enticements to sin, even those that arise from your natural inclinations. Thus the Spirit conquers the flesh. The clean heart, possessed by Jesus Christ, conquers the cravings of sensual appetite. Benevolence overcomes selfishness; a love for perishing souls conquers worldly ambition and makes a brilliant young man ready to sacrifice wealth or promotion in order to devote himself to the

self-denying toils of a foreign missionary.

The will is the battle-ground with every one of us. If evil desires control the will, sin reigns; if a Christian conscience controls the will, grace reigns. David's crime was in the wicked surrender of his will to a powerful sensual enticement. In his case lust conquered conscience; and the lust, as he afterwards bitterly confessed, brou ght forth death.

Temptations are bribes to our selfishness, and we are all liable to encounter them continually. But when we go out to look after such bribes, and encourage them, then comes the wickedness. Therefore our blessed Master enjoins on us that most loving and solemn coun-

sel, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

A person enters into temptation when he wilfully places himself under the influence of an enticement to sin, and consents to parley with it. If the cholera is an epidemic, then every one is exposed to it. But the person that needlessly goes unvaccinated into a house where the small-pox is raging, has no right to ask God to save him from the loathsome disorder.

The young Christian that buys a ticket to the average theatre, with its abounding sensualities, has no right to pray, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil." Such a person is thrusting himself within Satan's clutch. No amount of resolving

to do right will save you if you remain under the influences that lead you to go wrong.

The moment that any one goes toward a dangerous object, with a secret desire after that object, that moment he or she "enters into temptation." I have known many persons to put a bottle of wine on the table under the specious plea that health required it. The deceitful drink got its hold upon them before they were aware. A habit coiled itself around them like that South American vine that coils itself around a tree until it strangles the tree and holds only a blasted trunk in its green and glossy embrace.

From a long observation I am thoroughly persuaded that any one, even a sincere Christian, who

for any reason whatever tampers with any intoxicating beverage, is playing with a viper, though he little dreamed of becoming an inebriate when he "entered into the temptation."

What is true of the wine-cup is equally true of gaming, or of the first acts of dishonesty, or of violations of sexual purity. Can any one take coals of fire into his bosom and not be burned? We often wonder how, under a sudden temptation, certain persons have fallen from a high position into disgrace and ruin. If we knew the secret history of such cases we should discover that they had been dallying with temptation until they had been weakened and corrupted by it. The fiber of the tree had become worm-eaten before

the gale struck it. No man goes to hell suddenly.

Every one of us has some vulnerable point. Post your sentinel right there; watch and pray right there. Beware of the sin that has a handsome face and a smooth tongue. Hideous sins attract nobody. Beware of the sin that doth so easily entrap you. Form no intimacy with any one that lowers the tone of your religion. Beware of those places and these amusements, however attractive, that weaken your love of Christ and unfit you for prayer and doing your whole duty as a pledged soldier in Christ's army.

Strong as temptations are, the overcoming power of divine grace is an overmatch for them. If you are true to your Master, he will

succor you when tempted. The victory that overcometh is your faith, not in yourself, but in the Omnipotent Son of God, whose you are and whom you serve. Triumphs over temptation will strengthen you.

The Indians have a superstition that the strength of every enemy a warrior slays in battle enters into his own limbs. This is an actual truth in regard to the Christian. He becomes stronger for every temptation whose "scalp" he wins, and every besetting sin that he slays. Next to the joy of saving a soul is the joy of victory in a hard fight with a spiritual foe.

Our God as a Rewarder.

Among all the names and attributes of our Heavenly Father, that is a very endearing one that is contained in that glorious epic of faith, the eleventh chapter of the "Hebrews." We there read that God is the "*rewarder* of them that diligently seek him." That precious promise is linked with every earnest prayer and every act of obedience. God rewards labor.

Does not every farmer act in faith when he drives his plough in springtime, and drops his grain into the mellowed ground? Every minister prepares his gospel message—every Sunday school teacher conducts the Bible lesson, and every godly parent tills the soil of the child's docile heart, in the simple faith that God rewards good sowing with harvests.

God rewards obedience. He enjoins upon every sinner repentance and the forsaking of his sins, and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as his atoning Saviour. Every sinner that breaks off from his sins, and lays hold of Jesus Christ, does it on the assurance that our truth-keeping God will reward obedience. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things *not seen as yet*, pre-

pared an ark to the saving of his house." An unbelieving generation hooted, no doubt, at the "fanatic" who was wasting his time and money on that unwieldy vessel. But every blow of Noah's hammer was an audible evidence of the patriarch's faith in the Lord as a rewarder of obedience.

God rewards believing prayer for right things, when it is offered in a submissive spirit. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find." Humble, childlike faith creates a condition of things in which it is wise and right for God to grant what might otherwise be denied. We grasp the blessed truth that he hears prayer, and gives the best answer to prayer in his own time and way; upon these two facts we plant our knees when we bow

down before him. Oh, the long, long trials to which we are often subjected, while our loving Father is testing our faith, and giving it more vigor and volume! We are often kept at arm's length—like that pleading Syro-Phœnician mother—in order to test our faith; the victory comes when the Master says "be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Godly wives are often left to press their earnest petitions through months and years before the answer comes in the work of the converting Spirit. There was an excellent woman in my congregation who was for a long time anxious for the conversion of her husband. She endeavored to make her own Christian life very attractive to him—a very impor-

tant point, too often neglected. On a certain Sabbath she shut herself up and spent much of the day in beseeching prayers that God would touch her husband's heart. She said nothing to her husband; but took the case straight up to the throne of grace. The next day, when she opened her Bible to conduct family worship, according to her custom, he came and took the book out of her hands and said, "Wifey, it is about time that I did this," and he read the chapter himself. Before the week was over he was praying himself, and at the next communion he united with the church.

Verily, God is a *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him. That praying Hannah who said, "The grief of my heart is that of all my

six children not one loves Jesus," was not satisfied that it should be so. She continued her fervent supplications until five of them were converted during a revival. They all united in a day of fasting and prayer for the sixth daughter, and she was soon rejoicing in Christ. The victory that overcame in that case was a faith that would not be denied.

Sometimes the prayers of parents are answered long after the lips that breathed them are mouldered into dust. When a certain Captain K—— sailed on his last sea-voyage he left a prayer for his little boy written out and deposited in an oaken chest. After his death at sea, his widow locked up the chest, and when she was on her dying bed she gave the key

to their son. He grew up a licentious and dissolute man. When he had reached middle life he determined to open that chest, out of mere curiosity. He found in it a paper, on the outside of which was written, "the prayer of M—— K—— for his wife and child." He read the prayer, put it back into the chest, but could not lock it out of his troubled heart. It burned there like a live coal. He became so distressed that the woman whom he was living with as his mistress thought he was becoming deranged. He broke down in penitence, cried to God for mercy, and making the woman his legal wife, began a new life of prayer and obedience to God's commandments. And so God proved to be the rewarder of a

faith that had been hidden away in a secret place a half a century before! I have no doubt that among the blessed surprises in eternity will be the triumphs of many a believer's trusting prayers.

My friend, if you are not a Christian, I entreat you to put the divine promise to the test. Jesus Christ's invitation to you is "follow Me!" He calls on you to forsake your darling sins and offers you pardon. He calls you to self-denial, and offers you peace of conscience. He calls you to his service, and offers you more solid joys than this world can give or take away. He calls you to a clean, pure, useful life, and offers you grace sufficient for it. He calls you to follow him through sunshine or storm, up hills of

difficulty, and through some sharp temptations—to follow him implicitly, gladly and heartily to the last hour of earth, and then in heaven you will acknowledge that the "God of all Grace" is the eternal *rewarder* of all who obey him.

The Way to Face Lions.

DANIEL is one of the model men in the Old Testament; in some respects he is about the best character for young men to study and to imitate. In his youth he faced ridicule by refusing to touch the king's wine; in his later life he was not afraid to face the king's lions. There are two or three things about his course in this last matter that young people ought to notice. In the first place he did not send

any apology to the King of Babylon. Apologies for doing a right thing only belittle the act and take off the grace of it. In the second place he did not brag about what he was going to do. There was no bluster or big talk. When I was a pastor, I used to be rather distrustful of people who, when uniting with the church, made very loud professions and promises. They reminded me of Peter's boastful speech to his Master, "Though all men forsake thee, *yet will not I.*"

Daniel neither apologized nor played the braggart. He saw that there was serious business before him; he knew all about the ferocious lions in the royal park, and had made up his mind to face them when the time came. So he

quietly went up to the chamber on the roof of his house; he threw open his lattice, and worshipped God in prayer, "just as he did aforetime." Actions speak louder than words. The old hero went down on his knees three times in the day; busy man as he was, he took time to pray; brave man that he was, he did not care who saw him, or how soon his godly conduct was reported to the king. Daniel did not ask God to muzzle the lions; nor was there any intimation given him that if he did his duty there would be any miracle wrought in his behalf. Martyrs, when they make up their minds to suffer for the right, always expect that lions will bite and that fire will burn.

There are two roads for every

young person in the journey of life. They cannot take both, and every young man must decide which of them he will take. The one is a smooth and easy path of connivance and compromise, with no lions to encounter. The other is by the air-line of duty as God's word and conscience reveal duty; whoever treads that path must expect to be battered with ridicule, and often bespattered with misrepresentation and reproach. There are two kinds of church membership. In the one case, Mr. "Facing-both-ways" tries to stand with one foot in the church and the other foot over in the world; he is secretly distrusted by both; he has too much profession of religion to suit worldly people, and too little practice of

religion to please the people of God. The other type of religion is that of one who comes out squarely on Christ's side—not as pleasing men but God, which trieth the heart. This latter sort of Christianity is at a premium in these days, for it is quite too scarce. If courageous Christians encounter opposition, they are, after all, the only ones who win converts to Christ.

Daniel dared to be singular, both when he refused the king's wine-cup, and when he defied the king's lions. The young man or woman who follows the fashion and runs with the crowd counts for nothing. When they turn round and face the crowd for conscience's sake, they may encounter hard knocks, or scoffs, but they

save their own souls, and are in the right attitude to save the souls of others. Every young man who determines to keep a clean conscience and obey Christ's commandments will encounter some lions in the course of his experience. In business he must often decide between selling his conscience and selling his goods; he must prefer to be poor rather than to put a dirty dollar into his purse.

In social life he must not be afraid of being branded as "Puritanical" on all such questions as theatre-going and wine-drinking and Sunday bicycling and other conformities to bad fashions. In politics he must "bolt" whenever his party heads on the wrong track. I have watched the career

of thousands of young men for the past fifty years. The great majority of those who fail in life have failed for *want of courage.* They had no fibre to face lions of any kind. I have seen others who had the conscience and the courage to take Daniel's course and they have discovered that God had "shut the mouths of the lions" and given them a victory. If facing a duty and standing up for Christ costs dearly, it *pays gloriously* in the end. Retreat always brings ruin. My friend, never be afraid of but one thing, and that is the frown of God! His smile means heaven; his frown means hell!

Brought Out and Brought In.

MANY historical passages and personal incidents in the Bible illustrate great spiritual truths. For example, the narrative of the restoration of blind Bartimeus illustrates the process of conversion. The awakened sinner feels his need—prays for mercy—flings away his "garment" of sin—comes to Jesus—and the Holy Spirit does the regenerating work. There is a line in the sixth chapter

of Deuteronomy which describes the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt into Canaan by the Divine guidance: "He brought us *out* from thence, that He might bring us *in*." That illustrates the out-bringing and the in-bringing of every genuine Christian.

First, there is a deliverance from the slavery and condemnation of sin by the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. How constantly that expression occurs in the Pentateuch, "out of the land of Egypt, out of the *house of bondage*." The eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans is the believer's magnificent song of deliverance. There is therefore and thenceforth no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. He

brought them out from darkness into light, out from death into life. No one can sing this "new song" unless Christ has accepted him, pardoned him, and made him free from the law of sin and death. John Wesley said that his first joyful sense of deliverance came when he realized the perfect security of every soul that is sheltered in the Saviour. I once visited the little room in London where this glorious light poured into Wesley's soul; it was the birthplace of Methodism.

Does this in-bringing imply a perfect freedom from temptation or the possibility of any lapse into sin? No, indeed. The children of Israel had long marches, and severe discipline, ere the first foot stepped into the promised land.

Every converted soul must go in battle-harness, fighting every furlong of the road to heaven. I suspect that the first moment of absolutely sinless perfection any of us will experience will be after the gates of the "Father's House" have shut us in. Perfect assurance never means perfect holiness. It means that Jesus Christ promises never to desert us. Is not that enough?

Conversion does not only bring a person *out* of an old position; it brings him or her *into new practices. Conduct* is the test of conversion. Old sins are renounced; old habits sloughed off; there is another hand at the helm as well as other colors at "the peak." When sharp Mr. A— begins to do business on the square; when

stingy Mr. B— begins to send coal to the poor and gladly drops his "greenbacks" into the missionary plate; when churlish Mr. C— begins to treat his poor relations kindly; when gay young D— refuses to go to the theatre, preferring to escort his good mother to the prayer-meeting; when godless Mr. E— sets up a family altar, there has been a *new departure*. There has been a bringing *out* of old ways, and a bringing *into* new practices; and if this continues, then Jesus Christ has been at work on those hearts. Conversion begins with first steps, sometimes very small steps; but if it is genuine, it does not stop there.

Vital and vigorous religion depends on a coming clear *out* of the old sinful ways, and coming

thoroughly and decidedly and fearlessly *into* the life of honest conformity to Christ. The secret of the feebleness and fruitlessness of thousands of church members is that they have never entirely broken with their former selves and their former sins. The soil of Egypt still sticks to their shoes, and the spirit of Egypt still lingers in their hearts. No man can serve two masters. "Come *out* and be ye separate" is Christ's clear command to everyone who enrolls in his church. The Bible draws distinct lines; and no one can stand on both sides of the dividing line. On one side walks the Master, on the other drifts the worldling; and Christians need never expect to draw their frivolous, fashion-loving, un-

converted neighbors over to Christ's side of the line by compromising. The moment that we walk one mile with worldlings they will compel us to "go with them *twain.*" Egypt and Canaan lie in opposite directions. When Moses wanted to win Hobab he did not offer to stay with him, he said; "Come, *go with us,* and we will do thee good." That is the only way to win souls to Jesus.

Finally, what a new and cheerful aspect this passage from the dear old Book gives to *dying.* It is a bringing *out* and a bringing *in,* that's all. It is an escape from the toils, the trials, and the tears—from the head winds and the hard climbs, the sins and the sorrows of this old sobbing world into the rewards and the raptures of the

Father's House eternal in the heavens. Jesus died to bring us *out* of the prison-house of sin *into* the palace of his everlasting glory.

"Out of earth's weariness, trial and sorrow,
Out of its cares and its fears for the morrow
Out of its restless, unsatisfied yearnings,
Out of the fever of human heart-burnings,
Out of the pain of night-watching removed,
Into the sleep that God gives his beloved;
Into the dawn of a glad resurrection,
Into the house of unbroken affection,
Into the joy of Christ—thus confessing
Death in disguise is *his Angel of blessing.*"

How Revivals Begin.

In these days the word "revival" has come to be applied—especially by the secular press—to a series of special meetings held most frequently under the direction of an evangelist. A genuine revival is produced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; it describes such a condition of a church, or churches, that Christians are more than ordinarily active, and the conversions of souls are more than ordinarily

numerous. God sometimes seems to withhold his awakening and converting power when his people are predicting its advent. On the other hand, some outpourings of the Spirit have come suddenly—as a sort of blessed surprise.

Two things are very often true in regard to the beginnings of genuine revivals. One is that they come in direct answer to fervent prayer; and another is that they often start from the efforts of a very few persons, sometimes a single person. That sagacious and powerful soul-winner, Dr. Ichabod S. Spencer, tells us in his "Pastor's Sketches" that a very devout and active lady member of his church told him "a revival was coming!" When asked why she knew it, she re-

plied, "I do not pretend to know the secrets of the Lord, but I have got faith, and I believe in prayer. That good old deacon of our church who lives just back of my garden and is confined to his house, is praying for it every day. I am sure a revival is coming, and I shall not be surprised if some of his children should be converted. God answers prayer. You will see." Dr. Spencer tells us that a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit soon occurred; more than one hundred hopeful conversions were its fruits, and among the converts were a son and daughter of the wrestling deacon, and also a grandson of the woman who "believed in prayer."

During the forty-five years that

I had a pastoral charge, there occurred several very delightful seasons of revival; two of them deserve special mention. The first one took place during my first ministry, in the quiet town of Burlington, New Jersey, over fifty years ago. My congregation was very small, and the work was very discouraging. I preached as pungently as I was able, but no visible results seemed to follow. One day the wife of one of my two church-elders came to my study and told me that her son had been awakened by the plain, loving talk of a young Christian girl who had brought some work to her husband's shoe-shop. I said to the elder's wife, "The Holy Spirit is evidently working on one soul; let us have

a prayer meeting at your house to-night." We two spent the afternoon in drumming our small congregation together, and when I came to her house it was packed to the door. I have attended thousands of prayer-meetings since then, but never one that had a more distinct resemblance to the Pentecostal meeting in the "upper room" at Jerusalem. The atmosphere seemed to be charged with a divine electricity that affected almost every one in the house. Three times over I closed the meeting with the benediction, but it began again, and the people lingered until a very late hour, melted together by a "baptism of fire." That wonderful meeting was followed by special services every

night; the Holy Spirit descended with great power; my little church was doubled in numbers; and I learned more practical theology in a month than any seminary could teach me in a year. That revival was an illustration of my statement that a good work of grace often begins with the personal efforts of one or two individuals. That Burlington awakening began with that little girl and the elder's wife. We must never despise or neglect "the day of small things."

The other remarkable revival to which I have referred was in my "Lafayette Avenue" congregation in Brooklyn. It began on the first evening of the Week of Prayer, in January, 1866. The Young People's Association of our

church met at my house on that Monday evening, and it was the most terribly *cold* evening I have ever known in Brooklyn! The house was full, and the prayers were intensely fervent; some conversions gladdened us on the spot. The great work of grace begun that evening went on with undiminished power for five months; we received over three hundred new members, of whom about one hundred were heads of families. The "Memorial Presbyterian Church," of Brooklyn was organized by our people as a memorial of that powerful revival. That revival illustrates my other statement that spiritual awakenings often begin with special and fervent prayer for the descent of the "power from on high."

Every pastor ought to be constantly on the *watch*, with open eye and ear, for the first tokens of an especial manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence. Elijah on Carmel not only prayed; he kept his eyes open to see the rising cloud. The moment that there is a manifestation of the Spirit's presence, it must be followed up promptly. For example, during my pastorate in Market Street Church, New York, (from 1853 to 1860) I was out one afternoon making calls, and I discovered that in two or three families there were anxious seekers after salvation. I immediately called together the officers of the church, stated to them my observations, and we instituted a series of meetings for almost every even-

ing, and followed them with conversations with inquirers. A large ingathering of souls rewarded our efforts and prayers. I have no doubt that very often a spark of divine influence is allowed to die out from want of being *fanned* by prayer and prompt labors. Worse yet, it is sometimes dashed out as by a bucket of cold water thrown on by inconsistent, worldly-minded, or quarrelsome church-members! It was to *Christians* that Paul sent the solemn message, "quench not the Spirit."

When a church is in such a condition that a revival is sorely needed, it is wise to offer penitential confessions of sin and direct and fervent prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit's influence. That godly man, Dr. Thomas H.

Skinner, told me that when he was the pastor of the "Arch Street Church," in Philadelphia, he and some of his elders met together every evening and prostrated themselves before God in humble confession and supplication. Then they invited a few others to join them. The fire thus kindled spread until the whole congregation was under a baptism of heavenly flame! A large number of Christians were quickened, and many sinners were converted.

Revivals of such a clear-cut and powerful type as I have been describing are not, I fear, as abundant as they once were. They are not sought for, and prayed for, and labored for as they ought to be. Ministers, too, often send off

for professional "evangelists" instead of preaching pungent sermons themselves, and calling on their people to be "up and doing." Every pastor should determine to be a soul winner. Every church should be a harvest field. Personal responsibility for souls deeply felt, and personal efforts for souls faithfully put forth, are pretty certain to pioneer glorious revivals. Oh, how they are needed! They will begin when Christians begin to hunger for them, and to pray and work for them. God never defaults in his promises.

Why not, good friends, *begin at once* to test him?

Tighten the Buckles.

It is related that a cavalry officer, with a small number of followers, was pursued by an enemy who were in large force. He discovered that his saddle-girth was coming loose; his comrades were urging him on to greater speed; but he dismounted, *tightened the loose buckle,* and then rode on, amid the shouts of his companions. The broken buckle would have cost him his safety—

perhaps his life. His wise delay ensured his safety, and sent him out of the reach of his pursuing enemies.

This incident suggests several spiritual lessons. A very obvious one is that the Christian who is in such haste to rush off to his business in the morning that he does not spare any time for his Bible or for prayer, is quite likely to "ride for a fall" before sundown. One of the most eminent Christian merchants of New York told me that he never met his family at the breakfast table until he had had a refreshing interview with his God over his Bible and on his knees. His family worship afterward was not only a tightening the buckle for himself, but was a gracious

means of safety to his household. One of the greatest dangers in these days is that too many children are growing up—even in nominally Christian families—with sadly lax sentiments in many vital directions. They have loose views about God's day and God's Book, and very loose practices as to attendance upon God's worship. They start out in life with a broken buckle, and when the stress of temptation comes, they are easily thrown to the ground. Fathers and mothers owe to their children as well as to themselves the duty of tightening the saddle girth.

Not only do many families suffer from laxity in parental government and godly parental training, but I fear that some

congregations suffer from laxity in the teachings of their ministers. No church is very likely to rise higher than its own pulpit. If the shepherd of the flock holds loose doctrines; if he is so "liberal" that he gives away, or throws away, vital truths; if he lets down too many bars that the Bible wisely puts up, then it is no wonder that the flock wanders off into the ways of worldliness. There is no danger in these days of excessive strictness, or of "Puritanical" principles or practices. The danger is just from the opposite direction. Would it not be a wise thing if some pastors, who see that their churches are being overtaken and demoralized by worldly temptations, should call a halt, and *tighten their buckles?*

The incident at the head of this brief chapter has a very close application to the maintenance of a vigorous, happy and useful Christian life. The very word "religion" is derived from a Latin word that signifies "to bind fast." True religion means the being bound fast to the Lord Jesus Christ, in constant dependence on him and obedience to him. It is the very opposite of loose thinking and loose living. How to keep up a healthy spiritual life is the daily problem with every Christian. The parable of the buckle gives a hint. True piety is never self-sustaining. We only can "do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us." Without him nothing; with him everything. Therefore it is that our Bible ex-

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horts us, with prodigious emphasis, to "pray without ceasing." When we relax in this vitally important duty, the enemies will soon overtake us, and overmatch us, and leave us in the dust. Brethren and sisters, *tighten the prayer-buckle.*

Songs in the Night.

We always think of our Lord and Saviour as a divine teacher, preacher, and worker of wondrous miracles; we seldom or never think of him as a singer. Yet on that night when he had eaten the paschal supper with his disciples, and delivered his last loving discourse to them, "*they* sang a hymn"; and we may well suppose that the Master's voice blended with theirs. The hymn usually sung at the close of the passover

supper was that majestic old Hebrew song of praise, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." Gethsemane, the betrayal, the awful conflict in the garden, and the cross, were just before him; yet our Master set us the sublime example of a "song in the night," and that, too, the darkest night he had ever known on earth.

A few years afterwards Paul and Silas are confined in a stifling dungeon at Philippi—their backs lacerated with the scourgings of their brutal persecutors. Instead of wails and groans, the two heroes break forth into such a triumphant burst of sacred song that their fellow-prisoners are awakened by the extraordinary duet!

In these experiences of our Lord and of his two apostles there were literal *songs in the night:* and they were the antetypes of thousands of Christian experiences in all subsequent times. It has always been the test of the deepest and strongest faith that, like the nightingale, it could pour forth its sweetest melodies in the hours of darkness. This is a spiritual phenomenon, not to be explained by ordinary natural law. It is supernatural. The Bible tells us that "God our Maker giveth songs in the night." This happy phrase explains itself. It means that in times of sorest affliction our heavenly Father gives to his faithful children cause for songs—both the matter to sing about and the spirit of grate-

ful praise. That old-time saint had caught his pitch when he sang, though fields were bare and barns empty, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." You cannot starve a man who is feeding on God's promises; and you cannot make any man or woman wretched who has a clean conscience and the smile of God, and the love of Jesus shed abroad in the soul.

What a thrilling outbreak of triumphant faith was that which came from the brave old Thomas Halyburton of Scotland in the darkest hour of his bereavement. When a much-loved son was taken away he makes this record: "This day has been a day to be remembered. Oh, my soul, never for-

get what I reached this day. My soul had smiles that almost wasted nature. Oh, what a sweet day!" His own fatal sickness was very protracted, and was attended with intense suffering. After a night of excruciating pain he said to his wife, "Jesus came to me in the third watch of the night, walking upon the waters, and he said to me: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and I have the keys of hell and of death.' He stilled the tempest in my soul, and lo! there was a great calm." A philosopher of the Hume and Huxley school would be likely to dismiss all this as a devout dream of an excited imagination. But Halyburton was a hard-headed professor of theology in a Scotch university—

not a style of men easily carried away by the illusions of a distempered fancy.

No skeptic's sneers can explain such spiritual phenomena. When men of the calibre of St. Paul sing such "songs in the night" as he sent forth from Cæsar's pretorian guardhouse they cannot be explained on any theory of frigid psychology. While dark hours of calamity or bereavement bring to the ordinary man of the world distress and peevish complaints, they bring to a Christ-possessed soul tranquil submission and often an uplift of triumphant joy. Such experiences are contrary to the ordinary course of nature. They can only be accounted for by that deeper and divine philosophy which makes

God to be the direct personal comforter of his own people in their seasons of sore affliction. The path of trial may lead down into grim and gloomy gorges that no sunbeams of nature penetrate; but "Thou art with me" is the cheerful song that faith sings along the darksome road. As Maclaren beautifully says, "He who guides into the gorge will guide through the gorge; it is not a *cul de sac* shut in with precipices at the far end; but it opens out on shining table-lands where there is greener pasturage."

There are some of us old-fashioned Christians who still believe that a loving God creates dark nights as well as bright noon-days. As many as he loves he sometimes corrects and chastens. And a

truly filial faith recognizes that all his dealings are perfectly right. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastenings of the Almighty." I have seen a farmer drive his plowshare through a velvet greensward, and it looked like a harsh, cruel process; but the farmer's eye foresaw the springing blades of wheat, and that within a few months that torn soil would laugh with a golden harvest. Deep soul-plowings bring rich fruits of the spirit. I have often had occasion to tell my parishioners that there are bitter mercies as well as sweet mercies; but they are all mercies, whether given to us in honey or given in wormwood.

The day is God's and the night

also. This is as true in the realm of grace as in the realm of nature. God orders the withdrawal of the sun at evening time, yet that very withdrawal reveals new glories in the midnight sky. Then how creation *widens* to our view! The stars that lay concealed behind the noontide rays rush out and fill the spangled canopy. So, in the night seasons which often descend upon the Christian, fresh glories of the divine love are revealed, fresh power is given to our faith, fresh victories won, and a new development is made of godly character. What sweet voices are God's promises to our chastened hearts! What deep melodies of praise do the night hours hear! "The Lord commandeth his loving kindness in

the daytime and *in the night his song shall be with me.*"

I trust that these simple words may come as a lamp into some sick chamber, or into some house of sorrow, or into some sorely troubled hearts. Bethany had to become a dark town to two poor women before Jesus could flood it with joy. Before Gethsemane's midnight struggle Christ himself chanted a hymn; and happy is the man or woman who can go into life's hard battle singing! The ear of God hears no sublimer music than a Christian's *songs in the night.*

Temptations to Drinking.

A VERY large amount of drinking *begins* outside of the dram-shop. The habit of using intoxicants is formed, for the most part, not in saloons, but at home or in social gatherings, or in clubs or restaurants. The saddest fact of all is that this fatal habit is so often the direct result of *temptations* that are either carelessly or wantonly presented. The tempter does not intend to ruin his or her

friend when the intoxicant is offered,

> "But evil is wrought by want of thought
> As well as want of heart."

For example, the hospitable master and mistress of a house invite an evening company, and spread their table with a lavish provision of meats and drinks. On that table the lady of the house, at the dictate of a sinful fashion, places several choice brands of wine, and on a sideboard stands a bowl of inviting punch. In that company is a young man who is tempted to take his first glass, which, unhappily, does not prove to be his last glass. Among the guests is also a husband who has promised the wife of his early love that he will never again yield to his awful appetite and turn their

home into a hell. That punch-bowl is too much for him; he drinks, and goes reeling home with his shame-stricken wife, to awake next morning in the agonies of remorse. According to the good old Jewish law, "if a fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacks of corn are consumed, he that *kindled the fire* shall surely make restitution." Who kindled the fire in that mansion where a false hospitality put the bottle to a neighbor's lips? The master and the mistress of the mansion; and a poor "restitution" can they make for a ruined home and broken hearts!

It is time that all people who claim to have a Christian conscience face that declaration of God's Book that "it is good

neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy *brother stumbleth.*" This means that no one has a moral right to do anything the influence of which will work mischief to his neighbor. I have a legal right to attend a theatre and witness a salacious play; but I have no moral right to go, not merely because I soil my own soul, but because I am giving my money and the sanction of my presence to what is a slaughter-house of all purity. On the same principle—not merely of self-preservation, but of its influence on other people—I have no right, as a Christian, to abet the drinking usages. If a glass of wine on my table will entrap some one into an evil habit, then am I thoughtlessly setting a trap

for his life. I am his tempter. I give the drink customs my sanction, and to him the direct inducement to partake of that glass in which the serpent may be coiled. If the contents of my decanter make "my brother stumble," he stumbles over me. If he goes from my table and commits some folly or outrage, I too am to a certain extent guilty, for I have a partnership in every wrong that he may commit and every wound he may inflict on the hearts of his loved ones while under the spell of my "Madeira" or "Champagne." I gave him the incentive to do what otherwise he might have left undone.

Nor is it only in directly offering an intoxicant, but in affording the *example* of drinking that I

may be a tempter. None of us liveth unto himself alone; our influence is as inseparable from us as is our shadow on a sunshiny day. "Why don't you take a glass of wine with me?" said a distinguished clergyman at a public table to a gentleman who sat beside him. The quiet answer was, "On account of my example." The minister blushed, and concluded that he had better heed Paul's precept, that a bishop ought not to be given to wine.

The custom of "treating" is fraught with enormous evils. It is said to be increasingly prevalent among business men who wish to win customers or to compliment a customer after a bargain. All this is playing with fire. I once labored hard to reform an in-

ebriate in my congregation. After several relapses he became perfectly sober, and gave good hope of permanent reform. For months all went well, and his dark home became filled with sunshine. One day the reformed man met a business friend who invited him to go and lunch with him. Liquor was furnished, and the entertainer pressed the reformed inebriate to "take a glass with him." The unhappy man swallowed one glass, and it unchained the demon in a moment! The old habit came back with redoubled power, and the poor slave of the bottle never got upon his feet again. Who was the greater sinner in that wretched transaction?

Human lives turn on the pivot of single acts which may not at the

time seem important. I have in my possession a most pathetic letter written by a gentleman of good education—in an almshouse. He wrote to me: "All the misery of my wretched life was caused by the first 'sherry cobbler' that I ever drank; it was at the solicitation of a Mr. K——, at a hotel in Columbus, Ohio, and I drank it under protest. I am the embodiment of the fatal fruits of that one drink." On the summit of a hill in that same State of Ohio is a court house so singularly situated that the rain drops that fall on one side of the roof descend into Lake Erie; those which trickle down on the other side pass into the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico. A faint breath of wind determines

the course of these rain drops for three thousand miles! So a single act determines often a human destiny for this world and the next. A young man who had partially reformed from habits of dissipation was offered a glass of wine by an affectionate but thoughtless sister; in yielding he rekindled a thirst which swept him back into drunkenness. The hand that ought to have sustained him laid him low.

Social drinking customs are threatening to increase in our country. The decanter is stealing back again on to the dinner tables of people from whom we should expect better things. Intoxicants are frequently offered at weddings and in social gatherings. Club life is becoming popu-

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lar, and there are very few clubs that are under restrictions of total abstinence. Betting and bottles are the two concomitants of the football matches and rowing matches which attract thousands of our college students. We need a tremendous arousing of conscience all over this land to the growing havoc of the drink usages. The saloon-keepers are not the only sinners; the parents who offer temptations to their own children and to their guests may be as guilty as they before God. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him and maketh him drunken!" Let that thunder over the land.

Hints to Inquirers.

To those who honestly desire to be saved from a sinful heart and life into a life worth living I venture a few frank and friendly hints.

1. It may be that you are "feeling deeply." About what? If you feel deeply what an enormously wicked thing sin is, and that you are a sinner, then thank God for it. But do not be content with mere feeling. Tears never washed away guilt or saved a soul.

The world of woe may contain myriads who are weeping over lost opportunities and wasted lives. Your Bible does not say weep and be saved; it says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." To "feel deeply" is well, as far as it goes, if it is followed by *action*, but feeling involves one great danger; to sorrow over your sins, and then to stick to your sins, is a grievous wrong to the Holy Spirit, and an equal wrong to yourself. It hardens the heart most terribly. The most difficult persons to reach are those who have sorrowed and sighed, and made good resolutions a hundred times, and yet never repented of sin or lifted a finger to obey Jesus Christ.

2. The first message with

which Christ began his earthly ministry was "*Repent!*" When the apostle Peter was dealing with awakened souls at Jerusalem he condensed his directions into this short, sharp sentence: "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Genuine repentance means a vast deal more than grief over sins, or even hatred of them; it means to turn from your sins, and abandon them, with a full purpose of obedience to Jesus Christ. It signifies both a change of heart towards sin and a change of conduct. The way for a tippler to repent is to break his bottle; for a profane man to repent is to stop swearing; for a dishonest man to repent is to make restitution to those whom he has cheated. I

knew of a certain person who was pungently convicted in a revival meeting, and seeing a man there whom he had wronged he called the man out into the vestibule and humbly asked his pardon for the wrong. That was the first step towards a sound conversion. I emphasize the duty of thorough repentance because in these days there is not enough made of it. Cheap surface work makes cheap Christians; deep subsoil repentance makes strong, healthy Christians, who will stand wash and wear.

3. Another vital point is unconditional submission to God. General Grant's memorable answer to the commander of a conquered fort was "unconditional surrender"; and that is what your heart must make. Don't attempt

to bargain with God. Saul of Tarsus yielded everything when he cried out from the ground, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" An intelligent woman who had been in sore distress for many weeks said to her pastor, "I am done quarreling with God. I have resolved to submit to him and serve him, and to do all the good I can while I live, and then go to hell as I deserve." Her pastor smiled, and quietly replied, "You will find it hard work to get to hell in that way." The honest-hearted woman soon found that her willing submission of her heart to God and her patient readiness to obey him and do her duty was bringing her a calm, abiding peace.

To know Christ's will, and do

it in Christ's strength, is the very core of true religion. Do not try to bargain for the ready pay of "joy" and "happiness." When the festering rifle ball is extracted the wounded soldier finds comfort, but not before. When the sin gets out of your heart and Christ gets in you will obtain real comfort. Paul was not continually begging to be "happy, happy, happy," like some thin, watery Christians nowadays. He bore sharp sufferings cheerfully, and to do Christ's will and to save souls was his joy and crown. Don't try to get to heaven before your time. If I can first get to be holy—*i. e.*, to be healthy in heart —I have no fear but that my Master will give me the full joy of salvation.

4. You may inquire, "Must I not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if I would be saved?" Yes, very true. But saving faith is vastly more than opinion or a devout purpose. It is an act; it is the act of yielding your heart up to the atoning Saviour, the act of joining your poor, weak soul to him as your Redeemer and Lord. When Christ was on earth he demanded prompt obedience: "Follow me!" Whoever would not take up his cross and follow his new Master could not be his disciple. Begin then, my friend, to do the first thing that Jesus bids you do. The Holy Spirit, working on your conscience, bids you do a certain thing to please Christ. Do it. When you honestly take any step either in abandoning a

sin or in doing a duty, and do this simply to please Jesus Christ, then conversion has begun. You have changed masters. To be willing to trust on Christ and to go with Christ even for a single step is the beginning of a Christian life. As for raptures and ecstacies, you will have enough of them when you get to heaven. The smile of conscience and the smile of Christ will be enough here.

5. I have not said anything in these simple, plain counsels about prayer. If you are honestly striving to quit sin and to follow Jesus you will instinctively pray. Real prayer is sincerely asking for what you really want. Unless you do what Jesus commands you, years of prayer will never save your soul. Remember also,

my friend, that you will make no headway without the help of the Holy Spirit. He alone can regenerate your heart. He may be striving with you for the last time, and if you drive him away you are lost! Quench not the Holy Spirit! Every delay is at a terrible risk. Perhaps the loving Saviour in the still small pleading voice of his Spirit may be now giving a last final knock at the door of your heart.

Finally, the whole great question of your salvation must be settled between you and your Saviour. Surrender yourself to him. One honest hour with Christ is the "inquiry meeting" you need most. No preaching, no talking, can save you. Jesus can. "Whatever he saith unto you, *do it*."

Come and See.

"Come and see." This terse reply of Philip to Nathanel is the true answer to be given to all those who are troubled with doubts and difficulties about Christianity or about their own religious duty. The only satisfactory test of Christianity is the test of personal experiment. The skeptical class—whether the skepticism be wilful or involuntary—is almost entirely composed of those who have never come to

Jesus Christ in a reverent, docile spirit—never sought to be enlightened by him, and never honestly tried to keep his commandments. I feel perfectly sure that if the outspoken infidels would spend even a few weeks in a patient *trial* of Christ's precepts for themselves, if they would ask the help he promises, and endeavor to put in practice his commandments, they would find their fog-bank of infidelity all dissipated by exposure to the Sun of Righteousness. The vast majority of infidels have made no personal test of Jesus Christ in any way. David Hume confessed that he had never studied the New Testament and knew very little about Jesus Christ. If he had sincerely tested the efficacy of

prayer for himself; if he had gone to Christ for light and found none; if he had honestly obeyed Christ's precepts and found himself none the better for the honest experiment; then Hume might with some show of reason pronounce prayer a mockery and Christianity a delusion.

Jesus Christ—both as a loving invitation and a fearless challenge—says to everyone, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." Do those who actually go to him, confessing their weakness, ignorance and wants, come away without any sensible relief? Do those who pray aright find it a mockery, and do those who sincerely practise what Christ bids them find themselves none the better, purer and happier for it? These are

fair questions for every skeptic—yes, and for every doubting and troubled soul—to face. Another man's doubt or denial amounts to nothing against my personal knowledge from actual experience. Those of us who have tried Jesus Christ for ourselves, as a Redeemer, as a spiritual guide, as a friend, as a supporter and comforter, can fearlessly say to every unconverted person, *Come and see.* Try our Saviour for yourself. We do not make any preposterous claims for perfection; but we do *know* that we are better men and women—stronger, cleaner, happier, and more unselfish and heavenly minded—for even an imperfect following of Jesus Christ. We know whom we have believed; and of this actual

experience no scoffer can outwit us, and no infidel can rob us.

Many a poverty-stricken Christian can say—Come and see how much sunshine my religion pours into my plain, poorly-furnished home. Many a converted sensualist can say—Come and see how much cleaner my life is since I gave my heart to Jesus. From tens of thousands of sick-rooms and death-chambers has gone out the triumphant testimony—"for me to live was Christ; for me to die was gain." It is recorded of Sir Isaac Newton that once when Dr. Halley, the astronomer, vented some infidel opinions in his presence, Newton said to him: "Dr. Halley, I am always glad to hear you talk about astronomy and mathematics, for those are sub-

jects you have studied. But you should not talk of Christianity, which you have not studied. I have; and am quite certain that you know nothing about the matter." When the great philosopher, Sir David Brewster, was dying he said to Sir James Simpson, "I have had the light for many years, and oh, how bright it is! I feel so perfectly sure, so perfectly happy." Brewster was the prince of opticians in his day and knew all about physical light. Is it to be supposed that he did not understand spiritual light from actual experience? He knew what truth was; do you suppose that a man of his discernment would pillow his dying head upon a lie? He had carried into religion the same inductive principles

that he had applied to scientific investigation. He had come to Christ, and *seen for himself*.

"Come and see." That is the short, simple, earnest, common sense appeal which I make to every honest seeker after truth, every soul troubled with doubt or tormented with a sense of sin and guilt. Come and look at my divine and adorable Saviour for yourself. Study his words. Study his works. Study his life. Study his atoning death for you and me and all other poor sinners. See what faith in him has wrought for all who have tried him. Ask him to accept you; ask him to guide you; ask him humbly, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Don't trust to the treacherous to-morrow. Good in-

tentions never yet have saved a soul: they have lulled thousands into hell! *Now* is the only word for you. If your life is ever made what it ought to be in this world, and if you are ever to reach heaven, you must betake yourself to Jesus Christ. No pastor, no evangelist, no friend can be a substitute for him. One honest hour of penitential prayer and decisive surrender of your heart to Christ will give you a new life here and an everlasting life up yonder. A single decisive step, straight to Jesus, will prove the beginning of a new life; the last step will take you into heaven.

The Honey of God's Word.

A SINGULAR incident in the old Hebrew history illustrates the sweetness and light that flow from God's blessed Word. Jonathan was leading the army of Israel in pursuit of the Philistines. When the troops reached a forest where the bees had laid up their abundant stores, several honeycombs were lying upon the earth. Jonathan put forth the rod in his hand and dipped it in a honey-

comb, and put it in his mouth, "and his eyes were enlightened." Refreshment came to his hungry frame and enlightenment to his eyes, which were dim with faintness and fatigue.

What a beautiful parable this incident furnishes to set forth one of the manifold blessings of God's Word! In the superbly sublime nineteenth Psalm David pronounces that word to be sweeter than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. In the same passage he declares that "it is pure, enlightening the eyes." Again the Psalmist says, "The entrance of thy word giveth light." It is not the careless reading or the listless hearing of the book, but its entrance into the soul, which produces this inward illumination.

There is a sadly increasing ignorance of the Scriptures; when read publicly in the sanctuary thousands give but little heed. They do not take the vitalizing, heaven-sent truth into their souls as Jonathan took the honey into his system.

But when the Word is partaken of hungrily, and the Holy Spirit accompanies it, there is a revelation made to the heart like that which the poor blind boy had after the operation of a skillful oculist. His mother led him out of doors, and, taking off the bandages gave him his first view of sunshine and sky and flowers. "Oh, mother," he exclaimed, "why did you never tell me it was so beautiful?" The tears started as she replied, "I tried to

tell you, dear; but you could not understand me." So the spiritual eyesight must be opened in order that the spiritual beauty and wisdom and glory of the divine Word may be discovered. Many a poor sinner has never found out what a glorious gospel our gospel is, until he has swallowed the honey for himself.

The growing Christian never outgrows his Bible; in that exhaustless jewel-mine every stroke of the mattock reveals new nuggets of gold and fresh diamonds.

Even as a mental discipline there is no book like God's book. Nothing else so sinews up the intellect, so clarifies the perception, so enlarges the views, so purifies the taste, so quickens the imagination, strengthens the understand-

ing, and educates the whole man. The humblest day laborer who saturates his mind with this celestial schoolbook becomes a superior man to his comrades—not merely a purer man, but a clearer-headed man. It was the feeding on this honey dropping from heaven which gave to the Puritans their wonderful sagacity as well as their unconquerable loyalty to the right. Simply as an educator the Scriptures ought to be read in every schoolhouse, and there ought to be a chair of Bible instruction in every college. As the honey strewed the forest for Jonathan and his soldiers to feed upon, so the loving Lord has sent down his Word for all hungering humanity, high or low. As the sunlight was made for all eyes,

so this book was made for all hearts.

It was more than light; for it is an enlightener. Not only does it reveal the grandest, the sublimest and most practical truths, but it improves and enlarges the vision. It makes the blind to see and the strong sight all the stronger. Who of us that have been sorely perplexed about questions of right and wrong, and puzzled as to our duty, have not caught new views and true views as soon as we dipped our rod into this honeycomb? Poor Cowper, harrassed and tormented, found in the twenty-fifth verse of the third chapter of Romans the honey which brought light to his overclouded soul. John Wesley made the most signal discovery of his

life when he thrust his rod into this verse: "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Even Paul had not learned his own sinfulness until "the commandment came" and opened his eyes.

Ah, there is many a one among my readers who can testify how the precious honey from heaven brought light and joy to his eyes when dimmed with sorrow! The exceeding rich and infallible promises were not only sweet, they were illuminating. They lighted up the valley of the shadow of death; they showed how crosses can be turned into crowns, and how losses can brighten into glorious gains. When I am in a sick room I

almost always dip my rod into the honeycomb of the fourteenth chapter of John. It brings the Master there with his words of infinite comfort. One of my noblest Sunday-school teachers so fed on this divine honey that on her dying bed she said: "My path through the valley is long, but 'tis bright all the way."

Nothing opens the sinner's eyes to see himself and to see the Saviour of sinners like the simple Word. The Bible is a book to reveal iniquity in the secret parts. If a young man will dip his rod into this warning, "Look not upon the wine when it is red," he may discover that there is a nest of adders in the glass! If the skeptic and the scoffer can be induced to taste some of that honey which

Christ gave to Nicodemus, he may find hell a tremendous reality to be shunned and heaven a glorious reality to be gained.

The honey from heaven lies abundant on the ground. May God help us to show it to the hungry, the needy and the perishing!

Has Your Soul an Anchor?

CLIPPER ships are not as abundant in New York harbor as they once were; but once I looked with much interest at one which was coming up the bay from a voyage to the Pacific Ocean. The gallant ship rode bravely with furled canvas in the convoy of a steam tug, and at her bow swung her trusty anchor. It had done good service, and deserved its place of honor on her front. More

than once, when the gale struck her in the open roadstead, or when off a lee shore the hurricane was making hideous music through her cordage, that anchor was unloosed, and running out with merry rattle of the chains it drove straight downward to its resting-place. Upon the bottom of the deep its flukes took brave hold, and while the ship strained on the cable above water the patient flukes stoutly held on below. As soon might she have attempted a voyage without a compass to guide her, or without canvas to impel her, as without an anchor to keep her from the devouring rocks or the deadly lee shore.

My friend, on your voyage to eternity has your soul any "*anchor* sure and steadfast?" The apostle

Paul tells us what it is, and he knew all about it from his own experience. It is *the hope in Christ* and *the hold on Christ* which is to the human soul what the anchor is to a ship. If you have it, you should use it in every hour of need.

1. You need this steadfast anchor to keep from drifting away into *skepticism*. The currents towards unbelief set with prodigious force in these days. The literature and science of the time are saturated with subtle skepticism; the only safeguard against practical infidelity is a *living faith in a living Christ*. The secret of so much veering about with every wind of false doctrine, and so many lapses into fatal error, is found in the sad lack of any

Christ-faith in the inner heart. By that I mean a faith which knits the soul to Jesus Christ, and puts *him* into the soul as an abiding presence and an almighty power. If you are a skeptic your only cure is to try Jesus Christ for yourself. Perhaps you profess to be a Christian but are terribly assailed with doubts. I once heard a veteran Christian say, "No skeptical books disturb me; for Jesus Christ has vanquished more doubts and difficulties in my heart than the most subtle infidel could suggest."

2. If you are not assailed with doubts, you are certain to be assailed with *troubles*. No hurricane can strike a full-rigged ship more suddenly than storms of adversity may burst upon you;

they come, too, at an unexpected moment. Tempests burst upon a soul as tempests burst upon the sea, without an hour's warning. You may be struck "all aback"—may be stripped of many a topsail which ambition had hoisted on many a spar of prosperity; you may be obliged to throw out much of your lading into the sea; but if Jesus Christ is in your soul you cannot suffer wreck. The anchor, sure and steadfast, will hold you. When we see a good man beaten upon with heavy adversities and yet preserving a calm, courageous, cheerful spirit, we do not discover the secret of his serenity. We may wonder that he is "not moved as other men are." But the eye of God sees that there is an in-

terior life hid with Christ in that good man's soul which no storm can touch or dislodge. When Martin Luther was struck with sudden tempests he used to sing the forty-sixth Psalm above the roar of the winds; his anchor never dragged. Paul's answer to the assaults of men or devils was, "I know whom I have believed." Those persecuted apostles were wonderfully calm and composed and heroic men; we never hear a whimper from them. In my long experience as a minister I have seen just such fast-anchored Christians—sometimes in a lowly room of poverty, sometimes under distressing sickness, sometimes under cruel injustice and unkindness, sometimes under desolating bereavements. Oh, God!

thou dost keep in perfect peace the soul that is stayed on thee!

3. An anchor is equally needful to keep you against the stealthy *undercurrents of temptation*. An unanchored ship may be lying on waters as smooth as glass, and yet before the master is aware his keel is on a rock! The invisible tide bore him away so softly and so silently that he did not observe the motion. So are thousands of people—yes, and some professed Christians, too—carried on the rocks every week, not by gales of adversity, but by undercurrents of strong temptation. One man is slowly seduced into slavery of the bottle; or he feels the grip of sensual temptation, but takes no alarm till he strikes the rocks with a hideous

rent of character. Here is a church-member who insensibly drifts into neglect of his Bible, neglect of prayer, and laxity of Sabbath observance. Another gets in an undercurrent of utter worldliness; it swings him along slowly and surely until he has lost sight of his lighthouse; he is aroused by no sudden shock, but when we look for him where he used to be, and where he ought to be, he is not there. The world got hold of him, and his anchor had no hold on Christ.

It is not strength of intellect that saves a man, or the most respectable surroundings, or mere orthodoxy of creed. He must have Christian principle or he is lost. No man is morally safe in business or safe in politics or

safe in personal character when conscience cuts loose from God. He may float for a while, but it is a question of time how soon he shall go to the bottom. God never *insures* any one, not even in the church, who has refused to guide his course by the Bible compass, and to fasten his soul to Jesus Christ.

My friend, it is no dream of pious fancy and no delusion of a devout imagination that I present to you when I exhort you to fasten your immortal soul to Jesus Christ. He is the "anchor, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." This anchor reaches into eternity. The cable of Christ's love will not only keep you steadfast through life's storms and through its

treacherous undercurrents, but will advance you heavenward. The refusal of Jesus Christ means the shipwreck of your immortal soul. Fasten in faith your weakness to his strength, your sinful heart to his cleansing grace, yourself to his infinite power, and you are saved. If you reach heaven, my friend, you will give all the glory not to your own skill or your own seamanship, but to Him whose atoning blood purchased your redemption, and whose mighty arm of love brought you into the heavenly port. Today Christ may be yours! Tomorrow may be too late. Lay hold on Jesus now, *now*, NOW!

Christ's Workmanship.

The first time I saw Cologne Cathedral—nearly half a century ago—it presented a stumpy appearance, for the towers had not yet been built. The next time I saw it, the scaffoldings on which the builders were busy were rather a disfigurement. But a few years since, when I beheld the completed towers, lifting their snow-white splendors into the sunlight, I felt that the old

historic Rhine saw no such magnificent object in all its course from the Alpine mountains to the sea.

This is a bit of a parable of the way in which the Master constructs a Christian. The Bible describes true Christians as "Christ's workmanship created anew unto good works." If any sharp critic should look over a company of church-members gathered at a communion-table, he might say, "Well, if these are Christ's workmanship, they are very imperfect specimens, as I can testify from personal acquaintance with some of them." Very true, but if that same critic wished to select a piano he would not go into a manufactory where its different parts were being put

together; he would go into the salesroom and see the finished instruments. This world is only a workshop for the fashioning of Christian character. "Ye are Christ's building," said the great apostle; the towers were not up yet. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," was that same apostle's honest confession; the scaffoldings were still standing, and the Master's work on that heart and life was still incomplete.

When sharp criticisms are levelled at any company of sincere Christians, the critic must consider what materials the Master had to work on, in poor, fallen human nature, disfigured and defaced by sin. He would have to

take into account the especial weaknesses and wickednesses to which many of that company were naturally inclined. One had bad hereditary infirmities. Another had, from his cradle, a violent temper, which requires, even yet, the constant drenchings of divine grace to put out its angry flames. "Before I was converted," said a distinguished minister to me, "I wonder how any one could live in the same house with me." Brother A—— was plagued with unruly sensual passions; Sister B—— with envy and censoriousness; Deacon C—— had to contend with natural indolence, and Elder D—— with a constitutional covetousness made worse by a stingy parentage. Every one of these had to en-

counter the evil atmosphere of a "world lying in the Wicked One." Yet out of such materials Christ Jesus has had to rear what shall become in due time a temple of the Lord! Verily, my dear friends, you and I had better confess that the best part of us is what our patient Master has already made, and the worst part of us is what remaining selfishness and unbelief would not let him make.

Christian character-building is like cathedral-building—a gradual process. The first act of saving faith joins the new convert to Jesus, and then to that foundation must be *added* the courage, the meekness, the patience and the godliness which are the evidences of growth in grace. Let no new beginner be discouraged. Oaks

do not grow like asparagus. A strong and solid godly character is not finished in a year. Some poor pumice-stone has to be thrown out, and bad timber has to be rejected. It required the Master-workman sixty years to complete such a character as the heroic missionary Livingstone, and more than three score and ten to finish the fruitful fullness of such a life as the late William E. Dodge, or that of the eminent Christian jurist, the late Justice Strong. Every year in a true Christian's life—be it long or short—ought to witness a positive advance in "good works." "Am I growing?" is the question for every one of us to ask. How do I look in the eye of a watchful world? If the scaffolding is up,

is there any genuine building work going on behind it? Do not imagine that what you call faults and small sins are of no account. Nothing is small that makes or mars the character which the world is watching here, and which we must present on the great searching Day of Judgment. Nothing must be scrimped or slighted; we are often great sinners in what we wrongly think to be but little things.

Let us all bear in mind that if we are Christ's workmanship, we must let our all-wise and loving Master have his own way. The disciple must not dictate to his Lord. We must allow him to use his own tools. How much cutting and chiseling we often need! How keen and sharp also is

the chisel which he sometimes uses! The sound of his hammers is constantly heard in his spiritual workshop; and with it are often heard the wondering cries of some sufferers who exclaim, "Why art thou applying to me the file, the saw or the hammer?" Be still, and know that whom he loveth he chasteneth. If such creatures as you and I are ever to become jewels in his crown we must not draw back or murmur at the polishing. If we are his building then let him fashion us according to his divine ideal of beauty, at whatever cost to selfishness or pride or indolence or vainglory. We must co-operate with our Lord and Saviour. Christ working at us and on us—and we working with him and for him—

that is the process that produces such structures as he will present at last before his Father and the holy angels. Let us keep our eye on the pattern which the Bible presents to us. The following lines, which I met with some time ago, are full of help and encouragement:

"It is better to weave the pattern of life
With a bright and a golden filling;
To do Christ's work with a ready hand
And a heart that's always willing;

"Than to snap the frail and delicate thread
Of our Christian lives asunder,
And then blame heaven for the tangled web,
And sit and grieve and wonder.

"Better to weave the warp and the woof
With the pattern of Christ's own choosing,
Winning the palm and the tuneful harp
And the crown, with no fear of losing.

"Then alike in the shade and in the sun
Let the shuttles of life fly fleetly;
And the Master's words, *'Well, faithfully done,'*
Will fall on us daily and sweetly."

Finally let no Christian who is striving after the Bible pattern fear that he is seeking his salvation by good works. "By grace are ye saved," is the divine side of the process. "Every man shall be judged according to his work," is our side. There is a beautiful harmony between what Jesus does in us and by us, and what we do for him and through his spirit. For we are his workmanship, created anew (by converting grace) unto good works; and to him be all the glory!

The Safe Dwelling Place.

To learn what it is to be a genuine Christian and why such a Christian does not go to wreck amid all the temptations of this present evil world, we need only go to our Bibles. In the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah we light, for example, on this grand description of the righteous man: "He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him;

his waters shall be sure." Every word of this is worth studying; it tells the secret of spiritual strength and security; and simply because there is a divine support and a divine supply.

"He shall dwell on high." Truly conversion is a change of place; it puts a man in a new position toward himself, toward his fellow men, and toward God. While the ungodly build down on the shifting sands, and the flimsy structure at last "falls in," the wise man makes his abode up on the everlasting cliffs. I once climbed up to the magnificent fortress of Salzburg, which overlooks wide leagues of emerald plains with the snowy Tyrolese Alps in the background. It is one of the most enchanting

outlooks in all Europe. But while I could enjoy the splendid prospect only for an hour, I found that a hundred or more people were living up there. So it is with a soul that has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and has repented of sin, and been regenerated by the Holy Spirit; he has got into a new position, breathes a new atmosphere and has a new outlook. *He lives up with God.* This is the true higher life. The morning sun of God's favor shines on him, and at evening-time it is still light. There is such a thing as keeping our heads and our hands busy in all the useful activities of life and yet having our hearts dwelling "in fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

This strong position affords a sure *protection* from the worst dangers that assail the soul, and the worries that most disturb our peace. The righteous man's "place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks." This vivid passage recalls the rocky heights in Palestine and Syria on which men reared their fortresses in olden times. It describes spiritual solidity, strength and security. This is a picture of all those good men and women whose characters are rock-based and rock-built. Their sure foundation is on God's immovable and infallible word as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Their faith is no blind guess work, no devout delusion; it is a rational, intelligent, whole-hearted grasp on heaven-revealed truth. It is

the believing soul's response to him who says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." He says, "Trust me," and the believer trusts him. He says, "Follow me, and I will uphold you," and the believer follows him. God saith to me: "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is the rock of ages." My divine Saviour saith to me, "I give unto my sheep eternal life; they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands." He will take care of his promises. You and I have nothing to do but believe and obey. I once spent a night in the ancient castellated convent of Mar Saba in the gorge of the Kidron. All night I lay secure in the strong fortress while the jackals howled

down beneath us, and the Bedouin prowled without the walls. So may every follower of Christ who has lodged himself in the stronghold of the divine promises rest securely and let Satan's jackals howl as fiercely as they choose, or the adversary lie in wait outside the gateway. When I put my soul and my eternal interests into Christ's keeping, why should I worry? Duty is mine; service of the Master and my fellowmen is mine; my salvation belongs to him who hath promised it. Who can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

If we dwell thus on the munitions of rocks, our characters become solidified also. We get a measure of our Lord's unchange-

ableness; we become men and women of rock. The apostle Peter, when writing to his fellow Christians about Christ, says to them: "Unto whom coming as unto a living stone ye also became living stones, built up into a spiritual house." "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." There is a quaint old Scottish version of this passage that puts iron into our blood:

> "Who sticketh to God in stable trust
> As Zion's mount he stands full just,
> Which moveth no whit, nor yet doth reel,
> But standeth forever as stiff as steel!"

There is a great demand for this style of Christians in the business world, in civil life and in social life, as well as in pulpits and

in press. Shaky preaching tends to make shaky Christians. A minister whose own knees are quaking with doubt about the Book which God has given him to preach will put no backbone into his hearers; he must be firmly planted on the rock if he would draw others up to that rock.

There is one more promise to those who dwell up in God's strong fortress. Sometimes a garrison is obliged to surrender because their provisions are exhausted, or the supply of water has failed. But no danger of this kind need to alarm the children of faith who live in God's Gibraltar. Bread shall be given them and their waters shall be sure. There is an inexhaustible well in that citadel. Godliness is profit-

able in all things; even in worldly affairs, those who obey God's commandments are commonly the most thrifty. Christianity does not breed idlers, or swindlers, or gamblers, or knaves, or defaulters. It is not a bad thing to "live from hand to mouth" when the mouth is the mouth of faith and the hand is the hand of our loving Father. For our hungry souls he makes infinite provision; his manna descends every morning, and Jesus Christ is both the bread of life and the unfailing well-spring. My friend, if your soul is really dwelling in God's strong fortress, you ought to have a serene countenance and a sweet temper and a singing tongue.

Fruitful Christians.

AUTUMN is the season of fruit harvests, when the orchards have "paid their dividends," and the music of ripe apples is heard as they go rattling into their bins. Every Christian church is an orchard, and every tree in that orchard is "known by its fruits." Too many there are who try to pass for Christians, but from whom the yield of genuine graces can no more be expected than the owner of a grove of scrub oaks

would expect a crop of Bartlett pears. The fruits of the Holy Spirit—as the apostle catalogues them—are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance.

The first essential to a fruitful Christian is that he be well rooted. No part of a tree is so invisible and yet so important as its roots. The condition of a tree commonly reports where its roots are and what they are doing. A dearth of life below ground means barrenness above ground. The roots of our religious life are our secret motives and our ruling affections; and no one can claim to be a genuine Christian unless Jesus Christ dwelleth down in the core of his heart. When we are shocked to discover the loose

living and spiritual barrenness of some church members, we find that the branches of their profession hang over on the church side of the wall while their roots are in the sandy soil of worldliness on the other side. There is no heart-union to Christ; and he has declared: "Except ye abide in me ye can bear no fruit."

Grapes do not grow on thorn bushes, nor are figs gathered from thistles. Multitudes of people expect at some day to become Christians, and often they wish that they were Christians, and yet they do not apply the common-sense principle of causes and results. To be a Christian signifies that one has the divine "root of the matter" in him—that he has a character which

grows out of faith in the crucified Christ and proves itself genuine by obedience to Christ's commandments. Christian character is a growth—first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full ripe corn in the ear. There can be no vigorous growth without a deep rooting into Jesus Christ; and shallow conversions produce shallow Christians.

Some Christians are bountiful fruitbearers, and the reason is that they draw all their supplies of grace and all their inspiration of daily conduct from their deep-down heart-union to Jesus. Love of Jesus is the motive that subdues selfishness; and loyalty to Jesus holds them as a stout root holds a tree amid the blasts of winter's tempests or under the summer's

parching droughts. Glorious old Paul was always abounding in the work of the Lord, and he told the secret of it when he said, "Christ liveth in me." A drought never affects a well-rooted Christian whose soul is in constant connection with the fountain head of all spiritual power.

There is too much periodical piety in our churches. Some brethren are only flourishing during seasons of "revival." The rest of the time they have a very dingy look; their leaves get so powdered over with the dust of worldliness that they are very unsightly objects. There are some others whose leaf turns yellow very soon after they are planted in the church; this be-

trays a lack of moisture at the root, or perhaps a secret worm of indulged sin that is devouring the life of the tree. It is a wretched mistake to deal with the externals before the world while the condition of the heart is neglected. If the heart is rooted by the "rivers of water" the leaf will always be green and the fruit abundant. Such a disciple never ceases to yield fruit. Every year is a bearing year. It is the fixed habit of this faithful brother to attend the place of prayer in all weathers, to give according to his means, to pay every one his dues, to share his loaf with the suffering, to give his vote as conscience demands, and to stand up for Jesus Christ everywhere and at all times.

This is the sort of Christian who glorifies his Father in heaven by "bearing much fruit." The word "much" here is comparative. What would be much for a washerwoman would be paltry for a millionaire. A city church may plume itself on contributing fifty thousand dollars a year to foreign missions; but who in that church pinches himself or herself to do it? We could match against those dwellers in freestone and marble a poor widow who at the end of a day of drudgery puts on a dress that has been turned three times and trudges a mile on foot to attend a prayer meeting, saving her carfare for the missionary box; verily, her gift outshines them all.

"Much fruit" means the giving to Christ the best we have. It

is the lading of every limb on life's tree—be it a giant or a dwarf. He who in the lowliest sphere walks according to the Scripture rule, employs his time and single talent, controls his words, regulates his conduct, and does his work in such a conscientious way as to make his religion legible and luminous to all around him—such a man is a bountiful fruit-bearer. In the Isle of Wight dwelt a poor "Dairyman's Daughter" and a "Little Jane, the Young Cottager," whose precious clusters of choice grapes of grace have sent out a sweet fragrance over Christendom. They "did what they could." Luther, the prince of reformers; Livingstone, the prince of missionaries; Shaftesbury, the prince

of modern philanthropists, shook down their fruits over many lands; yet in God's sight they won no higher honor than the two cottage maidens.

Living to Jesus Christ every day and in the minutest things of life is the secret of fruitfulness. A fruitful Christian is a growth—not a sudden creation. It is the product of many days of sunshine and storm, of drawing in the vital sap from Jesus as the living Vine, of conflict and prayer and self-denials, and downpourings of the Holy Spirit. The religion that would rather be poor than touch a dishonest dollar, that would rather go through a Sunday's fierce storm to its mission school than lie on its lounge; a religion that in all things serves

Christ for the sheer love of serving him—this is the kind of spiritual growth whose fruits taste of the divine life within it. Blessed is that Christian whose broad boughs are laden with "apples of gold" for God's "baskets of silver!" Such blessedness is within the reach of every one who reads these words. Ask yourself, dear reader, "Am I bearing the fruits of the Holy Spirit?"

An Honest Look at Ourselves.

At the beginning of each year, merchants are accustomed to take an account of their stock of goods on hand; and all prudent men of business make an examination of their affairs, asking, "Am I a richer or a poorer man?" If it is wise for the tradesman to face his own financial condition, how much more is it the duty of every one of us to take an honest searching inlook of our own hearts, and the condition of our immortal

souls? "Examine yourselves," is the plain, yet kind commandment in God's Word.

One might suppose that the person with whom we live every day, and who inhabits our own body, would be thoroughly known to us. Yet how pitiably ignorant we often prove to be, and how many chambers in our own heart-house are seldom explored at all! Happy is the man who acts the Columbus to his own soul! Our greatest spiritual danger lies in the direction of unsuspected or undeveloped qualities. No one knows what is in him until he is tried. This truth cuts both ways; it applies to the good qualities as well as to latent weaknesses or vices. For example, Abraham could not have known how much

faith he had in God until he flashed the bare blade over the bosom of his beloved son. Daniel may not have fairly measured his own courage until the threat of the den of lions stared him in the face. One of the purposes of God's dealings and discipline of his people is not only to put his grace into them, but to bring his grace out of them.

On the other hand, David had seen the cover lifted off of a very horrible pit in his own character when he wrote, with a pen dipped in tears, that penitential fifty-first Psalm. Judas may have passed for an average specimen of honesty till the bag was intrusted to him, and the chief priests held up the shekels before his greedy eyes. Peter boasted

of his own constancy until his Master let him know what a flaw there was in his iron; just there the iron snapped. It is the undetected flaw that lets the axle break when the locomotive is spinning over the track at forty miles an hour—with frightful wreck of cars and passengers! Christians are never in greater spiritual peril than when dashing along at a high speed of prosperity amid the envy of many beholders. At such time look out for the axle! Secret traits of character often lie dormant and unsuspected in the hidden recesses of the heart. "Search me, oh, God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

We cannot utter this prayer too often or too fervently.

Sometimes we hear of the commercial failure of men who have stood high in the business community. They were not rogues or swindlers. But they were lamentably ignorant of the true state of their own affairs. They either over-estimated their own assets, or were afraid to probe their own losses to the bottom. Surely we ought to take "heed to ourselves" and to know just how we stand toward God. Not only our peace of mind, but our character and our eternal welfare are at stake. We ought to search ourselves honestly—dig down under professions of religion and transient emotions to the very roots of things.

We might well prove ourselves with such questions as these: Do I hate sin—even the sins I used to love, and do I fight against them, and pray to be delivered from them? Do I submit my will to Christ, and let him rule me and guide me? Do I give to my Master the key to my purse, my time and my influence? Do I feel a solid satisfaction in doing right, and a great joy in laboring for the welfare of my fellow men? Am I striving honestly to live every day as I pray? If we can find in our daily experience and conduct a satisfactory answer to such questions, we may believe that we are sincere followers of Christ.

While careful and prayerful self-examination is a vital duty,

yet it is sometimes so conducted as to be hurtful. Some good people overdo it. They become too self-conscious, and think too much about themselves. They are perpetually feeling their own pulses, and worrying about their spiritual health until they grow morbid and wretched. Bunyan describes such unhappy Christians in his "Mr. Fearing," who lay out in the cold all night because he was afraid to knock at the wicket gate, and went all the way to the Celestial City with his head bowed down like a bulrush. Weak nerves and dyspepsia frequently add to the sufferings of despondent Christians.

The way to be healthy and happy is to take both the *In*-look and the *Up*-look. We should look

into ourselves to discover our own weaknesses and wants. We should look *up* to the Source of all strength and peace and joy. Yes, and we may well take a frequent *Out*-look also to see how our work progresses, and what our fellow-Christians are doing, and how our fellow-creatures are suffering and what we can do to help and save them. While we "look to ourselves" let us also be looking after others. Above all let us be *looking unto Jesus*, the author and perfecter of our faith, the model for our lives and the guide into all truth. Beholding him, we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Two Wonderful Tracts.

"I HAD rather present myself in heaven with the 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain' in my hand than with Sir Walter Scott's 'Peveril of the Peak.'" So said the illustrious Christian philanthropist William Wilberforce thirty years after Hannah More had first published this beautiful tract. Hannah More was the pioneer of tract writers, and she began her work in that line about the year 1792.

They were written in order to reach the common people, under the title of "Cheap Repository Tracts," and so popular were they that no less than two millions of them were sold in a single year! The two most famous of the series were "Parley the Porter" and the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." In my rural home both the tracts were the charm of my boyhood, and on a stormy Sabbath when I could not go three or four miles to our country church, Hannah More was my preacher, except when Legh Richmond enchanted me with the sweet story of "The Dairyman's Daughter."

About fifteen years ago I made a visit—in company with Rev. Newman Hall, the author of the world-known little booklet "Come

to Jesus''—to Salisbury Plain. It is a wide stretch of level ground, about the style of a Nebraska prairie, with hardly a tree to be seen. The most conspicuous object on all this flat tableland is that extraordinary collection of upright stones called, "Stonehenge." Carlyle once came to see these mysterious ancient relics, and brought Emerson with him. More interesting to me than these venerable memorials of antiquity was the fact that on that verdant plain the godly "Shepherd" of Hannah More's charming idyll had watched his flocks. Some sheep were in sight, and I said to Newman Hall, "Perhaps hereabouts the happy old man was standing when he said to Mr. Johnson, 'The weather to-morrow will be

just what suits me, for what pleases God, pleases me.'" I could fancy little "Molly" coming up with her apron filled with the bits of wood that she had gleaned off the bushes. She is the charming child who, when she saw the dish of potatoes and the coarse loaf and the pitcher of water on their supper table, said: "Father, I wish that I was big enough to say grace to-day; for I was thinking what *must poor* people do who have no salt with their potatoes; and only look, our dish is quite full."

In these days of overgrown wealth, when millionaires growl and grumble amid their luxuries, and when there is such a mad mania to be rich, it would be a wholesome thing if a copy of the

"Salisbury Shepherd" could be read and studied in every home in our land. Some complaining Christians might read it with profit; for discontent is a heinous besetting sin with too many Christians and an abomination in the sight of God. Gratitude is a cardinal grace; whoso offereth thanks glorifieth the divine giver of our daily mercies. Thanksgiving on one single day of the whole year is a poor substitute for thanks-living on every day—be it bright or stormy. I wish that some rich man would provide for the free distribution of a couple of millions of the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." It would be a grand lesson in sociology; it would teach prosperous Christians how to be saved from

selfishness and ingratitude; it might sweeten the coarse fare of many a child of God and smooth some wrinkles out of their faces.

Hannah More's fascinating story of "The Shepherd" has one, and only one, rival in the English tract literature, and that is Legh Richmond's "Dairyman's Daughter." They were published together by the American Tract Society over seventy-five years ago—one of them being "No. 9" and the other "No. 10" of their first series. The beautiful Isle of Wight was the scene of Mr. Richmond's two most famous tracts; he labored there during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth. His residence was at Brading, a

pretty village only a half dozen miles from Osborne House, where good Queen Victoria closed her long life amid the loving homage of all Christendom.

In the summer of 1872 I paid a visit to the Isle of Wight with a friend from Chicago, our chief errand being to see the spots which Legh Richmond had made sacred. In Brading stands the old Norman church in which Richmond preached; and close to the church wall is a plain white headstone on which is carved, "Sacred to the memory of Little Jane, who died on the 30th of January, 1799, in the 15th year of her age." It is her lovely career that Richmond describes in his famous tract "The Young Cot-

tager''; and after a whole century the most frequently visited grave in all Brading is the one in which the obscure girl rests who died in a humble cottage a few rods away.

We took a small phaeton and rode five miles to the hamlet called Arreton, where the dairyman lived. Over that same picturesque road Mr. Richmond used to trot with his pony when he went to visit the dairyman's daughter during her last illness. Richmond was lame, with a club-foot, and an old man in my Burlington parish (New Jersey) told me that he "used to help him mount his pony after his preaching service at Arreton.''

"Yonder is the cottage,'' said our driver to us, as we came in

sight of a lowly thatched dwelling standing under three elm trees by the roadside. We knocked at the door, and a young woman opened it, and we entered the modest sitting-room, in which her pastor held those memorable conversations with Elizabeth Walbridge which have become immortal. Over that room was the little chamber whence her glorified spirit took its flight for the heavenly home. From the cottage we drove to the Arreton church, five centuries old; went in and sat down in the dairyman's pew, and then went out into the churchyard. A well-beaten path through the grass led us to a plain white stone, on which we read:

In memory of
ELIZABETH WALBRIDGE,
The Dairyman's Daughter,
Who died May 30th, 1801.
"She being dead, yet speaketh."

Yes, and to how many thoussands has that sweet consecrated cottage maiden so spoken as to point them to Jesus! Legh Richmond before his death heard of three hundred souls who had been converted by his marvellously beautiful tract, and since then the dear old American Tract Society has multiplied it by the millions!

How to Come to Jesus.

Among those who read this book may be some who are agitating the most vital of questions, "What shall I do to be saved?" To this question there is but one answer—*Come to Jesus.* Very true, you may say, but just *how* shall I come? Open your New Testament and read what the blind Bartimeus did. He rose up, flung aside his ragged garment, and hastened to the Saviour, who

called him—just as that Saviour is now calling you. That poor beggar believed in Christ and therefore went to him; but all that his *faith* could do, was to put him entirely into Christ's hands for healing. The utmost that your faith can do is to put you into connection with that divine Jesus who died to atone for your sins, who pardons and bestows the gift of eternal life. The Holy Spirit is pressing you right up towards Christ Jesus.

"Must not I pray?" Yes; and the more direct your prayer the better. Bartimeus knew just what he wanted, and that was restoration of his sight; that was what he asked for. In the same way must you come and fervently ask Jesus Christ to forgive your

many sins and to cleanse your polluted heart. The old must come out before the new can come in. Open your heart's door, as it were, and invite Christ to enter, and to do that cleansing work. He declares that to as many as receive him, he gives the right to become the accepted children of God. No prayer that is not honestly sincere will be of any avail. It will be a perfect mockery for you to ask Jesus to make you what you are refusing to become. The drunkard who should pray for divine help to reform with a bottle of whiskey in his hand, would not be more inconsistent than for you to beg Christ to make you what you do not want to be and what you are not striving to be.

In salvation two are concerned —you and your Saviour. Therefore when you pray, do your utmost for the answer of your own prayer. Put your prayers into practice. Christ demands *obedience to himself*, and that is the very core of Christianity. Whatever he bids you—through your Bible and your own conscience—to do, begin to do immediately. No profane man can be forgiven until he stops swearing; no tippler can be saved until he stops drinking. As no man can serve two masters you must stop serving Satan before you can serve Jesus Christ. He demands honest repentance, and that means a great deal more than sorrow for sin; it means that you throw your favorite sins overboard, and make

sincere endeavor to serve Christ as your new master.

Again let me emphasize that word *obedience* to Christ's commandments. When on earth his usual style of calling men to discipleship was "Follow me!" He says that to you now. He also says "Learn of me"; and how does a child learn to talk but by imitating its parents, or learn to walk but by using its limbs? Begin to obey Christ in the first thing that comes to your hands. During a revival in a certain church, a man who was under deep and distressing conviction of sin saw a neighbor in the congregation whom he had wickedly injured; he called the neighbor out into the vestibule and humbly asked forgiveness; he came back

with a light heart; he had obeyed the voice of Jesus in his own conscience, and had got a blessing. That was a right step, and it proved to be a decisive step. *Practice* in the same direction that you pray! Don't try to copy anybody else's experience, or stake your hope of true conversion on anybody's telling you that you have become a Christian. Bartimeus did not need to ask his neighbors whether he could see; he knew that the old darkness had given place to a marvelous light. No physician can convince a rheumatic patient that he is cured until the old and tormenting ache has gone out of his limbs.

My friend, you have got to be in dead earnest if you expect to

become a genuine Christian. Probably you have often thought about religion; probably you have in the past, made some resolutions and offered some prayers. You made no headway because you were holding fast to your sins and were unwilling to cut loose from them. I have seen a steamer at the wharf start its engine and while the propeller was churning the water at the stern the vessel did not move. A stout hawser held it to the pier. As soon as the rope was cast off the steamer started. It is of little matter what may be the sin or the sins that hold you back, so that they keep you from coming to Jesus and making a sincere surrender of yourself to him. Cost what it may, *repent*. You cannot cling

to your sins and cling to the Saviour too. Up to this time you have failed to become a better man or woman because you never sincerely cut loose from your old sinful ways, and laid honest hold on the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit may be striving with you. That is indeed a great mercy. Co-operate with the Spirit. At the point where the Spirit presses upon your conscience to take a step, or to perform a duty, right there you must yield. When Jesus Christ pressed on the young ruler to quit his estate and come and follow him, the young man drew back because he would not cut loose from his selfishness. He made the great refusal and went away "sorrowful"—or as it may

be read literally, "with a cloud on his brow." Compare him with Matthew, the tax-collector, who promptly quitted his business and won his place of immortal honor in the forefront of the New Testament. "He left all, rose up and followed Jesus." He found an almighty friend, a new life of glorious usefulness, and an everlasting crown. So may you, if you will be done with trifling, be done with postponing, be done with halfway work, be done with grieving the loving Spirit, and *give your whole heart to Jesus.*

The Music of the Heart.

TRUE piety is the harmony of the soul with God. His will becomes the will of his loving and obedient child; and such a Christian finds his happiness in the chime of his own desires with what God bids him to do. This is the fountain of all genuine *music of the heart*. God's hand is on every string and chord of this wonderful instrument which a loyal believer carries in his or her

breast; it is a harp of a thousand strings, and yet they all respond to the same divine touch.

An important part of all public worship is the service of praise. A psalm sung in the house of God may be only from the throat outward, without the slightest particle of devotion; then it is mere *noise.* The great apostle, in writing to the early Christians, tells them that they must not merely sing, but that they must "make *melody in their hearts* to the Lord." This signifies the music of the soul; if it be religious music, it must come from a religious heart; it must be the breathing of sincere love and grateful adoration. The audible sound must be toned by the secret feelings of the inward spirit. The original word which

Paul employed means to play on a stringed instrument. The most marvelous of all instruments is the harp of the human heart. What a multitude of chords it contains! What matchless melodies can be evoked from it! The one sure thing that we know about heaven is that it is the scene of unending praise; and perhaps a large part of that celestial music which John describes in the Apocalypse may be in the harmony of innumerable souls all rejoicing before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

A sinner's heart is full of wretched discords. He is out of tune with God—the prey of various passions and conflicting desires that make a perpetual jargon. Conversion by the Holy Spirit signifies a new hand touching the

heart-strings. Rebellions against God, self-will, self-seekings, murmurings, unbelief, are hushed. The regenerated heart attuned by the divine Spirit vibrates to a new and beautiful music. "He hath put a new song in my mouth" really signifies a change of heart. Enmity to God has been taken away, and the soul has come into unison with God. I do not know of any better definition of holiness than *to agree with God in all things.*

There was a new style of music issuing from the bigoted, blood-thirsty soul of Saul of Tarsus when he began to preach Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, and every one that heard him was astonished. The hand of his new Master was on the heart-strings, and they were

pitched to the melodies of redemption. The grace of Jesus Christ changes the tune of the heart, turns enmity into love, selfishness into benevolence, makes daily life a walk with Jesus, and the hardest uphill clamber becomes a step heavenward.

Does a converted heart always keep in tune when left to itself? No, I fear not, from my own experience, and from my observation of others. There would not be so much groaning and grumbling over hard lots, or so much backbiting among brethren, or such outbreaks of temper and tongue, if our hearts were always maintaining the right pitch. Like pianos, they often require retuning in order to keep us submissive to God's will and responsive to every call

of duty. I never ask the permission of my piano when I send for a man to tune it; our blessed Master never asks our consent when he lays his chastising hand on our wayward, backsliding or disobedient hearts. Let him do what seemeth him good.

A heart that is in good spiritual health has a very large *repertoire* of music. It plays a wonderful variety of airs. Sometimes it breaks forth in a jubilant note: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!" At another time it is pitched to a minor key, and breathes out the lowly, tender strain of penitence; God loves to hear the sweet music of a contrite spirit. Seasons of sharp trial have been known to call forth some strains to which

bright hours of prosperity were strangers.

In the Black Forest of Germany an old-time baron built a castle with two lofty towers. From one tower to the other he stretched several wires, which in calm weather were motionless and silent. When the wind began to blow the wires began to play; and as the wind rose into a boisterous gale, the old baron sat in his castle and heard his mighty hurricane harp ringing out grandly above the battlements! So while the skies are clear and our conditions prosperous, many emotions of a Christian heart are never called out. As soon as the winds of adversity smite the chords, the heart begins to utter strains of submissive faith, and even of sub-

lime exultation, which never had been heard in the calm seasons of sunny prosperity.

God created nightingales to pour forth their richest melodies during the hours of darkness. There was a pair of spiritual nightingales down in that dungeon at Philippi when Paul and Silas at midnight sang praises to God. Faith hath its songs in the night; and very welcome music such hearts make in the ear of heaven. My friend, if you cannot reach the notes of a nightingale, you may have the cheerful chirp of the cricket.

"There's a cricket within the Christian heart,
And a pleasant song sings he;
Let him sing of the mercy and love of God
That hourly fall on thee!
Let him whistle them out full loud and clear,
And never be drowned in sorrow's tear,
But all through the dark of trouble's night
Let him chirp and sing till the morning light!"

As the human heart is so extremely sensitive, it is to our reproach that we do not oftener touch that chord in the hearts of the sinful and the profligate which responds to every syllable of kindness. It was the kind word and cordial hand-grasp of Joel Stratton, the shoemaker of Worcester, that brought John B. Gough to his reformation and his glorious career as the advocate of total abstinence. Jerry McAuley has taught us that in the hardest heart there is a chord that will vibrate at the touch of love. Happy the Christian who can convert harp-strings from curses to songs of praise! In heaven there will be hosts of harpers harping with redeemed hearts; why should there not be more

rehearsals here on earth for those celestial melodies?

"Hearts once filled with thoughts of heaven,
Hearts to generous action dear,
Hearts redeemed and sins forgiven,
Hearts where love has cast out fear;
Hearts that would be ever raising
Loving thoughts for love untold,
Hearts on Jesus ever gazing,
Hearts like these are *hearts of gold.*"

Jesus Christ for Everybody.

CHRISTIANITY is a religion of love. Its fundamental precept is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man that he might be the brother of every one of us. He chose to be born among the poor; and although he was higher than the highest, he chose to become as lowly as the lowliest. The three years of

his wonderful ministry on our earth are all condensed into one short beautiful line—"he went about *doing good.*" To the cry of sorrow he always opened his ear, and suffering was the surest passport to his kind attention. He hated all sin, but he pitied and loved all sinners with an infinite compassion. If Jesus Christ had stood amid the multitudes at the Columbian Exposition as he once stood among the multitudes in Judæa, he would have sounded aloud the sweet invitation, "*Come unto me,* all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He offers to be everybody's friend, everybody's guide, and everybody's Saviour.

Perhaps some of you may say

that you admire Jesus Christ, but you do not admire every one who claims to be a Christian. Neither do I. There are some counterfeit Christians, just as there are counterfeit silver coin and banknotes. People never take the trouble to counterfeit what is good for nothing. Do you refuse to take a genuine gold coin or banknote because some rogue has issued bad ones? No, you do not; nor is it fair for you to reject Christianity because there are some counterfeit Christians. If you can prove to me that Christianity makes nobody better or purer or kinder or honester or more holy, then you would be wise in letting it alone. You must admit that Jesus Christ was a wonderfully perfect and lovable Being, and

that his religion, as described in the New Testament, is wonderfully beautiful and benevolent and desirable. You must acknowledge that those people who live nearest up to Christ's pattern are all the better for it. They are not absolutely perfect; but they have been kept from thousands of sins by following Christ, and have enjoyed countless blessings by trusting and obeying Christ. What they have done, you can do. The Lord Jesus offers to help you. "Come unto me! Come unto me!" is his glorious invitation; and "Whosoever cometh unto me shall be saved!" You may be discouraged in seeking riches, or in seeking health, or in seeking some things that you have desired to possess; but no

one need be discouraged in seeking salvation.

If you sincerely wish to be saved, there is a way to be saved. You admit that you are not what you ought to be, and that you have committed an immense number of sins. To be sorry for your sins is not enough and will not keep you from sinning again. Repentance for the past will not save you. It would be like a man quitting a leaky boat at sea with no better one in sight. There is a *Life-boat* in sight! Christ is an Almighty Saviour. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" If the sins of the world, then *your* sins. If Christ is a Saviour for everybody, then he is a Saviour for you. He made an atonement for sin

upon the cross, and no man need perish for want of an atonement. But in order to receive your share of the benefit of that atoning work, you must go directly to Christ Jesus.

The Bible is the best of books; but the best thing in it is that it guides you to Christ. Prayer is the means of reaching Christ. If you are thirsty, a cup is of value to you only as a means of bringing the water to your parched lips. The Bible and church-going and prayer are blessings to you only as cups to bring Christ, the "water of life," to your thirsting soul. There is none that taketh away sin but Jesus only. "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved" than that of him

whose blood "cleanseth us from all sin." If one landed at New York and wished to reach Chicago he would take the railway train designated for that city, and trust his baggage and his own life to the railway company in simple faith that they would bring him to his destination. Let this illustrate to you the glorious truth that Jesus Christ has provided a "new and living way" from the dominion of sin to the city of God. Every vehicle on this gospel-train bears this inscription, "Come unto ME and be saved!" Millions upon millions from all lands have reached heaven by this gospel road. No one need complain that he, or she, has not the means to buy a ticket. One is offered to you gratuitously, if you

will but accept it on certain conditions. Jesus Christ proclaims, "I am the *Way;* him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." You have only to come to him, trust your soul to his divine and loving care, obey his directions, and strive to live as he bids you. When you quit your sins and seek to do his holy will, he will give you grace to overcome sin. Every day he will give you strength to do your duty and to joy in serving him; and when you reach the "shining shore" of heaven your song of praise will be, "*None but Christ!*" "Unto him who loved me and saved me from sin and hell be all the thanks and the glory for ever and ever!"

Christianity is the religion for

the whole world. It is equally suited to every country, every color, and every condition of life —to the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the high and the lowly. The Bible is God's own Book for all God's children. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of everybody that comes to him. In coming to him there are two steps. One is to quit your sins; that means repentance. The other is to join your soul to Christ; that means faith. Sin would hold you back; cut it off! Jesus draws you toward him; yield, and come to him and obey him! If these two decisive steps make you a Christian, there will be one more step by-and-by, and that will bring you home to heaven.

All that is best in our national

life has flowed from Christianity. The foundation of our public morals is God's Word; the keystone of the arch is the right observance of God's day. The true light of our purest and happiest homes is the Lord Jesus Christ. To possess him will make you rich indeed, and "there is more of power to strengthen, elevate, and cheer in the word Jesus than in all the utterances of man since the world began." Lay to heart the precious truth, "God so *loved* the world that he gave his only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

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